The Simplest Thing a Person Can Do is Remember:

Memory in Spaces of Indigenous Palestinian Resistance

Submitted by Yara Hawari, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy* in Middle East Politics, October 2017

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

(Signature) …… (Date)……..

For my parents, Helen and Mahmoud.

Abstract

This thesis draws upon literature from the fields of oral history and Indigenous Studies to look at how Palestinians are using memories and shared narratives in spaces of indigenous resistance in Haifa and the Galilee. Looking beyond collecting and archiving, I have focused on commemorative activities and projects lead by various civil society actors in which oral history plays a central role. Taking a bottom-up qualitative approach my data is derived from in-depth interviews, informal conversations, participant observation and textual analyses, gathered between 2013-2016. This has resulted in an interdisciplinary thesis which conceptualizes Palestinian memory as a form of Indigenous resistance.

The Palestinian community in the 1948 Territory, unlike many of their brethren, remained on the physical site of the Nakba and the ethnic cleansing. This fact is an important and defining one, their physical presence on their land has influenced their identity and their collective narrative which is so heavily influenced by oral histories. Their subsequent exclusion and segregation from the Israeli Jewish settler population whilst creating spatial and temporal limitations, has at the same time allowed for an assertive Palestinian identity and narrative to develop without being assimilated into the settler structure. Memory in particular plays a huge role in the assertiveness of this Palestinian community and this thesis examines how they are being harnessed to challenge both the epistemic and physical erasure of Palestine whilst at the same time creating new forms of political and cultural agency to recreate Palestinian space.

At the same time as their exclusion from Israel, the Palestinian community in the 1948 Territory have also been largely marginalized from the Palestinian national project. Therefore, it has mostly been up to them to create space for themselves in which

futures can be imagined. This imagined future is based on memories of Palestine before the settler colonization and reinforced by commemorations return activities, which actively challenge the reality that the Zionist State deems irreversible.

The outcome of this research is the understanding that in certain Palestinian spaces in the 1948 Territory, there has been the development of a memory politics which is distinctly future orientated and has decolonizing potential.

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Note on Transliteration and Terminology

Transliteration of Arabic terms follows the most commonly accepted spellings that appear in English language media sources. Transliterated Arabic words or terms appear in italics with the English translation following in brackets. Transliterated proper names of places and people are not in italics. I use Arabic transliterated place names, rather than their English equivalents when the name is under contestation, for example the Naqab rather than the Negev and Acca rather than Acre. This is done as a conscious understanding of language politics and in particular as an effort to counter the erasure of Indigenous names. Throughout the thesis I mainly use 'the 1948 Territory' to describe what is now recognized as Israel proper. This is done to emphasize Palestinian space and to respect the fact that many Palestinians still refer to this land as Palestine. I use 'Israel' where appropriate, particularly to denote state and institutional space. Palestinians in the 1948 Territory are referred to as such, or as Palestinians with Israeli citizenship.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1. A story of flight, return and expulsion

Hamda's Return

People began fleeing from their homes, towns and cities before the Declaration of Independence of the new State of Israel in May 1948. The ethnic cleansing had already begun in Palestine at the start of 1947. Hamood and Hamda were among the many in the Galilee who left their homes when the "Zionist" forces began attacking the northern coastal plain area around Acca and al Kabri in April 1948. After the Zionist forces occupied al Kabri, their daughter Dheebi who had been staying with an Aunt in the village, fled to Ras al Naqoura. Once word had reached Hamood and Hamda that she had safely fled they too took off, leaving their beloved stone house behind. In fact, all of the members of the Arabs of the Samniya tribe (of which Hamood and Hamda belonged too), left their houses for the Lebanese border in fear of the massacres that they had heard about including Deir Yassin (April 9th, 1948), a horrific event that sent shockwaves throughout Palestine.

Hamood and Hamda were with five children of varying ages including a baby and Hamda was heavily pregnant. At first, they thought to go hide in the mountains near to their homes, but as the Zionist forces progressed they were pushed further north towards Lebanon. So they went to the village of Iqrit and then they continued on to Tarbikha. From there they went on to Huwara, an area right on the border with Lebanon. It was here that Hamda gave birth to baby Ahmad who was born on the side of the road. Not more than a few days after the birth they decided to carry on walking as the Zionist forces continued to advance towards them. They crossed into

Lebanon and reached a Shi'a village called Sheikhin where they decided to stop and set up the *beit al sha'ar* (typical Bedouin black tent made of goat hair) they had been carrying with them. Not long after, they moved into a house that Hamood had rented from one of the villagers.

Hamda was very unhappy in Sheikhin and wanted to return home, but Hamood told her that because the Jews had occupied Palestine they would not be able to. Besides, he told her there was no one left in Palestine, all the Arabs of the Samniya had also fled. Nonetheless Hamda remained stubborn in her resolve to return to. They stayed in Sheikhin for seven months and it was during this time that Hamda was busy planning her return. One day in November 1948, Hamda told Hamood that there was a man from the Sarhan family from al Kabri waiting to meet up with him in Sour, a nearby coastal town. So Hamood, having no reason not to trust his wife, set off to Sour to meet this man.

Meanwhile, Hamda had rented two camels from a camel driver. The driver had warned her that he did not go to Palestine anymore because the route back into Palestine had become dangerous and difficult. The Zionist forces had yet to fully secure the border but they were attempting to and soldiers stationed there were following shoot to kill orders for anyone who tried to return. Hamda convinced the driver that she just wanted to be dropped at the border and from there she would make her own way. He agreed, so she packed up their possessions and loaded them and the children onto camels whist she carried the two young babies.

When they reached the border, the driver told her that he would not go any further. Hamda gave him an indignant look and told him that he could not leave a woman with her young children including a newly born baby in such a dangerous situation. She

told him to take them just a little bit further. Out of guilt or exasperation, the driver took them across the border reaching a mountain near the village of Arab al Aramshe, overlooking the area where their stone house lay only a few kilometres away. Here, Hamda unloaded her possessions and children and sent the driver on his way back to Lebanon. She set up the *beit al sha'ar* on the mountain facing the direction of their house and waited.

Back in Lebanon, Hamood had returned to Sheikhin frustrated that the man from the Sarhan family had not showed up, only to find the house he had rented empty. He asked the villagers where Hamda and the children were and was told that they had returned to Palestine. Shocked, the only thing Hamood could do was also to return. He found a friend with a horse and together they rode back across the border. By chance, they came across the area that Hamda had set up the *beit al sha'ar*. Getting down from the horse he angrily approached Hamda reprimanding her what she had done. Turning to him calmly she said; "I told you I wanted to return to Palestine. I want to live on my land". Hamood demanded that they return back to the safety of Sheikhin to which Hamda replied; "even if you want to kill me, I am staying here". Having no choice, Hamood joined his family in the *beit al sha'ar*.

During the time they were away from the stone house, the Zionist forces occupied it and stationed the army commander in charge of the local area in it. After a few months, Hamood went to see some Jewish friends he had in the nearby Kibbutz called Elon and asked them for help. These friends approached the army on his behalf and asked them for permission for Hamood and Hamda to set up the *beit al sha'ar* on the land right next to the stone house. They were granted permission and so once more they set up the *beit al sha'ar,* but this time on their own land.

Hamda however was unhappy living in the *beit al sha'ar* whilst their stone house was being used by the "Zionist" commander. So, she set about making another plan to return. One day she turned to Hamood and told him to invite his friends from the Kibbutz and the Zionist commander over for dinner. The night they came over was a stormy one, with relentless rains and howling winds. Hamda had prepared a feast and it was laid out on the floor in the *beit al sha'ar*. When the guests began to eat, Hamda slipped outside unnoticed and slowly untied the ropes that anchored the *beit al sha'ar* to the ground. She quickly returned inside and joined the feast as if she'd never been absent. Shortly after, a huge gust of wind came a long and the roof of the *beit al sha'ar* blew away. The guests panicked as they were plunged into darkness and were no longer sheltered from the rains and the wind. Picking up their things they told Hamood and Hamda to hurry into the stone house with the children and their belongings. After a few days of sheltering in the stone house and with *sumud* (steadfastness) emanating from every pore of Hamda's body, the family's presence became a *fait accompli*.

Every time Hamda recounted this story to her grandchildren and great grandchildren, she would laugh and laugh at how crafty and cunning she was in tricking not only her husband in returning back to Palestine, but also the Zionist forces occupying her house. But alas the return was not permanent. One night in 1956 the Israeli army came once more to the stone house, but this time they arrested Hamood and his sons. They put Hamda and her daughters and all their belongings on a truck and drove them 40 kilometres south dumping them on the road near the village of Tamra. Forbidden from returning to the stone house by the military courts, they became internally displaced, *muhajareen,* eventually having to shelter in the village of Tarshiha. The house itself was sealed off, never to be used again.

To this day, over 60 years later, the stone house stands derelict and empty. Surrounded by barbed wire and fences, Hamda's family fought legal battles in the courts to try and get the house back, yet it was to no avail. Instead the house became the site of ritual visits, with the family visiting it on special days and holidays. They would climb over the barbed wire fence, clearing the weeds and plants that were around the house, running their hands along the stone walls. Sometimes they would just sit on the steps of the house breathing in the air of the Galilee and thinking about Hamda's return.

Figure 1.

2. Introduction and research questions

This story of Hamda, my great-grandmother, and her return epitomises the continuous and cyclical nature of the Nakba. Importantly however, it also shows continuous Palestinian resistance to the Zionist settler colonial project. Hamda's resolve to return to Palestine having fled to Lebanon was echoed by many Palestinians at the time. Indeed, this story is not a unique one and elements of it are reiterated across the fragments of Palestinian society. Every Palestinian has a Nakba story, a story that they share often upon meeting other Palestinians. It defines their collective experience and its consequences affect their daily realities whether they live in exile, in the West Bank and Gaza, or in the 1948 Territory.

I begin this thesis with Hamda's story because it symbolises the main themes within Palestinian collective memory; flight, return and continued expulsion/ displacement. As part of my Nakba story, I also wanted to highlight the connection between me, the researcher, and this work. The two are inseparable and making no claim to objectivity, I acknowledge the complex positions and intersections that intertwine and influence the knowledge production process. This process creates multiple truths and multiple histories and yet at the same time certain truths and certain historical narratives are often ascribed with more legitimacy than others. It is here that structures of power are revealed and this has certainly been the case with Palestine, where for so many decades the scholarly literature produced followed the hegemonic Zionist discourse. This was in part because historical narratives are dominated by victors of war and political elites, but also because the written has traditionally held more validity than the spoken word. The destruction of Palestinian society in 1948 saw much of the material forms of knowledge destroyed or stolen. As a result, there was a heavy

reliance on oral history to counter Zionist claims that Palestine never existed and that the land was without a people.[1]

In this thesis, I am bridging together broader literature on oral history and Indigenous studies to the case studies of Haifa and the Galilee. The Palestinians in Haifa and the Galilee are part of the community of the Palestinian citizens of Israel. In Arabic, they are often referred to as the Palestinians in the 1948 lands/territory or in *al dakhl* (in the inside). For many years after 1948, literature on this Palestinian community was limited. Having been initially ignored, they were relegated to being the Arab minority in Israel and the object of failed modernization studies. However, this changed and there is now a rich scholarly body of work that contributes to our understanding of the 'forgotten' Palestinians. Yet despite this richness in literature, the Palestinians in the 1948 Territory remain marginalized not only by the state in which they derive their citizenship from, but also by the Palestinian national liberation project and by the international community driving the 'peace negotiations'. It has therefore been largely up to them to create space for themselves in which their past can be remembered and futures can be imagined.

The geographical focus of this research has been both in Haifa and the Galilee, the north of the 1948 Territory and present-day Israel. The Galilee is an area of great concern for the State of Israel because of its Arab demographic majority. Despite having suffered an ethnic cleansing like the rest of Palestine in 1948, the Galilee has the highest concentration of villages that survived and whose populations were able to stay within the borders of the new state. It is a region which has maintained much of its Arab character, in a large part due to the institutionalised segregation enforced

[1] Although this claim would also later be debunked by various academic research into the Ottoman archives, including Beshara Doumani (1992) and Adel Mana (1999)

by the Israeli state. These are among some of the reasons why the region was able to develop a form of Arab cultural autonomy and indeed where there is culture, politics is never far behind. As a result, much of Palestinian civil society within Israel is centred in the Galilee. The politicisation of this civil society has seen organisations become bolder and more assertive, resulting in the creation of spaces in which Palestinians are able to challenge the exclusive settler colonial nature of Israel.

Most of the civil society organisations have their main offices situated in Haifa, rather than Nazareth which is often considered the capital of the Galilee. Haifa has become much more of the cultural and political capital of the Palestinian citizens for a multitude of reasons. Partially because it has attracted Palestinians from all around the country, with many of the younger generations from villages in the Galilee moving to the city in search of opportunity. But also, as we shall see in the chapter on Haifa, there is more access to resources in the city than in the peripheries. Haifa also sits as a gateway to the Galilee, and its Palestinian residents maintain strong connections to the Galilean village landscape as many are descendants from these villages. Therefore, because of the Galilee's demographic majority and seemingly cultural 'autonomy' and Haifa's position as the political and cultural capital of the Palestinian community in the 1948 Territory, my research focuses on this geographic area.

The gathering of Palestinian oral testimonies and memories has picked up speed recently, largely as a result of projects devoted to capturing the memories of the first Nakba generation before they pass away. This thesis is interested in what is being done with these memories beyond their collection and beyond the archives. In particularly, I am examining how they are being used by Palestinians to challenge both the epistemic and physical erasure of Palestine.

Theoretically, this thesis frames Palestinian memory as a form of Indigenous knowledge and Palestinian activities that challenge the settler colonial manifestations as Indigenous resistance. Indigeneity as a framework is necessary if we are to use the settler colonial paradigm as a lens in which to view Israel. As a framework it is relatively new to Palestine Studies, (this will be explained and developed in the following chapter), but its usefulness lies in its ability to explain the continuous process of erasure inflicted upon Palestinian society and the continuous process of resistance to this erasure.

Building upon these theoretical implications, my main research question and sub questions are as follows:

How are Palestinians in Haifa and the Galilee using oral history in spaces of Indigenous resistance?

- What are the memory methods/ practices being used?
- Where and how are these Indigenous spaces of resistance being created?
- What is the potentiality of these spaces of resistance?

This thesis is structured around four content chapters that draw heavily upon fieldwork I conducted over three years in Haifa and the Galilee (2013-2016). These are preceded by an introductory chapter (of which this introduction is a part of) and followed by a concluding chapter. Following the Introduction is Chapter Two which situates this thesis within the literature, outlining the main themes and giving an overall picture of the scholarship that has preceded this work. It ends with a conceptual framework which situates this research within the fields of oral history and Indigenous Studies. Chapter Three is the first one to draw upon my fieldwork and

examines the temporal nature of Palestinian oral history with a particular focus on memories and the transmission of these memories. It explores Palestinian time, post-memory and the transmission of trauma in the context of an ongoing settler colonial process, also known as *al Nakba al mustamirrah*. It also looks a commemoration in the Galilee and the relationship between a local narrative and the wider Nakba narrative. In this way, the focus of this chapter is on the first research sub question. Chapter Four specifically analyses Israel's 'mixed city' discourse and its effect on the collective memory of Palestinians in Haifa. Building on the literature about Israel's "mixed cities", urban space in settler colonial states and memories, this chapter shows how the past remembered relates to the urban reality and demonstrates that Israel's war on Palestinian memory is intimately land and space related. Finally this chapter will reveal how through marginalisation, the Palestinian community in Haifa is revealing new forms of political and cultural agency which are harnessing the memory of Palestine before 1948 to revive and to recreate Palestinian space. Chapter Five looks at the mobilization of memories in acts of return to the destroyed villages in the Galilee. It will show how both large and small return activities, intertwine collective and individual memories with placing Palestinian bodies on Palestinian land in a form of spatial resistance. Both Chapter Four and Five address the second research sub question which explores the creation of these spaces of resistance. Finally, Chapter Six, looks at how Palestinians in the Galilee are reviving the past and imagining decolonised futures, in both theory and practice. It discusses the importance of memory in the envisioning of futures and particularly the importance of collective imagining in the case of Indigenous communities. In this way, it addresses the last research sub question which asks about the potentiality of these spaces.

3. Methodology

3.1 Ajnabiya or bint al balad (Foreigner or daughter of the village)?

In late October 2015, I took part in *Yom Tarshiha* (Tarshiha Day) as I have done on many occasions previously. This year and the year before however, I was attending not only as a village descendent, but also as a doctoral researcher. My attendance was part of my participant observation fieldwork, which in itself was odd as I had to "observe" an event that I had participated in for many years. As usual, the organisers of the march were rushing around trying to get all the torches lit and arrange people into a line. I was holding the torch in my left hand, as I fiddled with my camera in my right hand. One of the organisers walked past me and shouted; "Torch in your right hand Yara, not your left!" He then turned to the people behind me and said "*ajanib* (foreigners) don't know how it's done." Furious, I recounted the experience to my father who was also in attendance of the event. Later, this organiser came up to us at the rally and jokingly, addressing my father rather than me, made a comment about upsetting me earlier with his *ajanib* comment. My father replied firmly that I was just as much from the village as he was. He reiterated this by stating; *Yara bint al balad* (Yara is a daughter of the village).

This incident troubled me not only from a personal perspective but also from a research perspective. From a personal perspective, I was hurt to be considered a foreigner, although I had never lived in Tarshiha, we visited the village most weekends when I was a child and I have a strong emotional connection to the place. For Palestinians, belonging to a village is not necessitated by actually residing there. Indeed, among the millions of refugees in exile, it is common that when asked where they are from, more often than not, they reply with the name of the village their parents/ grandparents/ great grandparents were expelled from in 1948. There is a

wealth of scholarship that discusses the Palestinian refugee sense of belonging and attachment to villages of origin[2]. From a research perspective however, this incident made me reflect on my positionality and brought up some very important questions that needed unpacking. Particularly it highlighted the debate in ethnographic studies and projects surrounding that of the insider/ outsider researcher. Writing on 'Arab women in the Field' (1988), Soraya Al Torki discusses the merits and disadvantages to researching one's own community. Al Torki argues that whilst 'insider' researchers spend less time settling into the field and have a "shared cultural knowledge", they must also "overcome barriers to confidence and to potential value judgement" from the community (Al Torki 1988, p.33). Yet this 'insider/outsider' dichotomy can itself be problematic when it fails to acknowledge the multiple layers and intersections of 'inside' and 'outside'.

I identify as a Palestinian woman, but as with so many Palestinians, this identity is not straight forward. I am what Palestinian American scholar Lila Abu-Lughod defines as a "halfie- people whose national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education or parentage" (Abu-Lughod 1991, p.466). Although anthropologist Kirin Narayan critiques this halfie label (in a similar way that can be applied to the insider/outsider label) by noting that rarely our identities "neatly split down the middle" (Narayan 1993, p.673), in the Palestinian diasporic community it is common to hear the label "halfie" for those with one Palestinian parent. So, whilst fully acknowledging the multifaceted nature of our identities, I adopt a loose understanding of the "halfie" to describe my background. My "halfie" label stems from the fact that my mother is white British and my father is an Arab Palestinian from the

[2] See the works of Julie Peteet (2005), Rosemary Saigh (2013), Diana Allan (2005) and Laleh Khalili (2004) for more on Palestinian refugee identities.

Galilee. This comes with an immense amount of passport privilege, carrying both a British passport and an Israeli passport. My life thus far has also been very much half and half in terms of time spent in the UK and Palestine. However, my first and primary literary language is English and my most formative years of my young adulthood were spent in the UK. I have passing white privilege which allows me the safety afforded to white people on first glances, although I am also frequently interrogated as to where I get my "exotic" looks from.

This "halfie" positionality undoubtedly informs my writing and my perceptions, not least because much of my education and academic training derived from Western institutions. These institutions and many of those in them are still very much wedded to making "theoretical nods" and "paying homage to what is usually dead European men" (Al Hardan 2014, p.64). For this reason, Anaheed al Hardan, drawing on Anibal Quijano, critiques the 'coloniality of power' and the hegemonic trajectory of history as emanating and culminating in Europe in her discussion on research Palestine. For Al Hardan, the insider/ outsider dichotomy is problematic because:

> It also overlooks the ways in which they position the researcher as an insider and as an outsider, and how this positioning takes place within the context of the coloniality of the overarching historical and political parameters of the numerous encounters that come to constitute our research (Al Hardan 2014, p.65).

Nonetheless, the discussion on what it means to do research in one's own community remains an important one. Whilst I am sure the organiser who called me a foreigner was not questioning my Palestinian identity, he was making a point that I was not 'quite' from the village. Abu-Lughod writes:

> Feminists and halfie anthropologists cannot easily avoid the issue of positionality. Standing on shifting ground makes it very clear that every view is a view from somewhere and every act of speaking a speaking from somewhere (Abu-Lughod 1991, p.468).

Abu-Lughod is emphasising that the way in which we approach our research, is influenced by our multiple identities including our geographic and social locations, our political affiliations, our gender etc. These all impact the way in which we come to know the world around us and in the case of scholars, how we carry out research. In my case, my chosen field of study is a community that I consider to be a part of and have a stake in. This is broadly speaking the community of Palestinian citizens of Israel, but more specifically the Palestinian community in Haifa and the Galilee. Conducting research within one's own community comes with many sets of challenges both in the field and in within the broader structures of the academy. These will be discussed further in the following sections.

More practically and with regards to my situation on the ground in Palestine, because of my Israeli passport I am granted freedom of movement denied to so many Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza and in exile. Nonetheless, this passport only grants me nominal citizenship and it overrides any privileges the British passport has to offer in Israel[4]. The Israeli state through legislative and social mechanisms (which will be thoroughly explained in this thesis), makes very clear on whom it regards as "other" and I fit neatly into this category.

[4] The British government website states; "As a dual national you can't get diplomatic help from the British government when you are in the other country where you hold citizenship." https://www.gov.uk/dual-citizenship

3.2 My father's daughter

In the afore mentioned incident at *Yom Tarshiha*, I was uncomfortable with the fact that the organiser had addressed my father in his apology and not me and that confirmation of my identity was done through him. It was clear here that my father had to legitimise my claim to Tarshiha. This gendered aspect to the legitimization of identity occurred throughout my fieldwork and here again I turned to Abu Lughod and her experiences during the fieldwork for her doctoral research. In '*Veiled Sentiments'* (1986), she recalls how her father went with her to Egypt to reassure the Bedouin community she was researching of her respectability as an Arab Muslim woman. Her father was not only the guarantor of her character but also gave credit to her claims of 'Arab-ness' despite her looking (at least to the Bedouin) Western.

During my interviewing process, I used the snowballing technique where I was referred on to speak to others through contacts. Many of the contacts knew my father and would introduce me to others as "Mahmoud Hawari's daughter". It is common practice among small and close-knit communities, such as the Palestinian community, to refer to each other through familial connections and in this case, as my father is my Palestinian parent it was not unsurprising that it was he who became my reference point. Nonetheless familial ties in Palestine are often traced through the patriarchal line; you are from the village of your father, you take your father's name as your middle name and surname etc. Thus, when asked for familial identity it is expected that one answers through the patrilineal line. As a feminist researcher, I found patriarchal assumptions and norms such as these both challenging and quite entrenched.

3.3 Emotional Labour and living in the "field"

In 1948, my family home in Tarshiha was bombed by Zionist forces and thirteen of my relatives were killed. It was an incident that was well known in the surrounding areas and one of the survivors (my great- aunt) became known as a symbol of the Nakba in the Galilee. Very often when I interviewed or spoke to someone from Tarshiha they would mention the bombing of my family home. Even when I interviewed people from other villages or towns, about 1948, often they would nod towards me and talk about the Hawari tragedy. In one interview, with the historian Adel Mana, further details of the tragedy were revealed to me unexpectedly. Mana had just published a book on the Galilee entitled; "*Nakba and Survival: The Story of Palestinians Who Remained in Haifa and the Galilee, 1948-1956*". During the interview, the conversation turned towards my village and Mana discussed how some of the people in the bombing had burned to death because of the fire that was caused in the house. Hearing these details I had not heard before was an emotional challenge I had not expected, nor did I expect the extent of the emotional labour for a Palestinian working on Palestine. The continuous process of settler colonialism in Palestine means that the trauma and loss is an everyday occurrence and this extends to the epistemic realm as well. Reading and writing within an academy that seems to work against you sometimes feels like a Sisyphean task.

Three out of the four years of my PhD research (2013-2016), I lived as a distance based student in East Jerusalem. The reality of military occupation and settler colonialism presents a variety of every-day obstacles for Palestinians including safety and freedom of movement. I have an easier experience than most Palestinians because of my afore mentioned passport privilege, but there are still issues that occur which would not for a non-Palestinian researcher. Being pulled over by police on the

side of the road and questioned after carrying out fieldwork in the Galilee is just one example of this. But there were also several extraordinary events during this time that made research a particularly difficult. The first was that of the 2014 war in Gaza and the second was the so-called Third Intifada or Knife Intifada. The latter had a direct impact on my everyday movement as I was living and working very close to 'Road 1' in Jerusalem where many of the extrajudicial killings of Palestinians allegedly carrying knives took place. During this time, I limited my movements severely and would sometimes not leave the house for several days at a time. Whilst the 2014 war in Gaza heightened tensions on the streets of Jerusalem, including increased Israeli police presence, checkpoints and rocket sirens.

It is important to make a final point here about access to the field. For many non-Palestinian (white) academics, travel to Palestine is a relatively simple and uncomplicated endeavour. For Palestinian academics on the other hand, it is not-many Palestinians live in perpetual exile, whilst others have to endure humiliating border procedures and continue to face the daily hardships that come with settler colonialism. Thus, conducting research in the 'field', if at all possible, is a phenomenal challenge for Palestinian researchers. In recent years many Palestinian colleagues with Western passports have been banned from entering Israel. Thus, more often than not, who can research Palestine can come down to a very practical issue; access. My access to and from the 'field' was relatively easy compared with most Palestinian researchers, but my field experience remained vastly different to that of my non-Palestinian colleagues.

3.4 Who can speak in the academy?

Typically, anthropologists were scholars who would study and shed light upon 'other' cultures enforcing the dichotomy of East and West (Narayan 1993, p.671). This circle of knowledge production also dictated the legitimate sources of knowledge based on universalist assumptions of objectivity and authority. However, the 1960s saw an emergence of more critical cultural anthropology rooted in Marxist theory and was strongly anti-imperialist.[5] Edward Said's critique in *Orientalism* (1979) came later and, avoiding "materialist analysis, sought to apply literary critical methodology" (Halliday 1993, p.148) to this kind of Western scholarship, pointing to the importance of the political and imperial underpinnings seeking to maintain material and epistemic hierarchies (1979). *Orientalism* inspired much of the post-colonial scholarship that followed, which among many other things was committed to bringing to light in the Western academy the human cost of colonialism. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's seminal essay '*Can the subaltern speak'* in 1988 continued this critique of Western scholarship, but also included an important critique of post-colonial studies for mirroring the power structures of colonialism and its complicity in maintaining the white hetropatriarchy (Spivak 1988). More recently in a lecture-performance entitled 'Decolonising Knowledge', Portuguese artist and writer Grada Kilomba delivered the following words:

> They place the discourses of Black/People of Colour scholars back at the margins, as deviating knowledge, while white discourses remain at the centre, as the norm; When they speak, it is scientific. When we speak, it is unscientific. When they speak,

[5] See the works of AbdelMalek, A., (1963) *Orientalism in Crisis*, Turner, B., (1978), *Marx and the End of Orientalism*, and the essays contained in Rodinson, M.'s (2015) *Marxism and the Muslim world*.

> it is universal. When we speak, it is specific. When they speak, it is objective. When we speak, it is subjective. When they speak, it is neutral. When we speak, it is personal. When they speak, it is rational. When we speak, it is emotional. When they speak, it is impartial. When we speak, it is partial. When they speak, it is they have facts. When we speak, it is we have opinions. When they speak, it is they have knowledge. When we speak, it is we have experiences. These are not simple semantic categorizations; they possess a dimension of power that maintains hierarchical positions. We are not dealing here with simple semantic, but rather with a violent hierarchy, which defines who can speak (Kilomba 2015).

Kilomba highlights that the binaries ascribed to white scholars and 'other' scholars hold very serious implications for what narratives and ideas are held valid. Similarly, Abu-Lughod writes that anthropologists who study their own communities are often accused of not achieving enough "distance" from the research (Abu-Lughod 1991, p.468). In my own work I noticed that critics of "native" anthropologists will often oscillate between *ajnabiya* and *bint al balad* to discredit 'halfie' scholars who conduct research on their own community. Either they are not native enough and therefore cannot know the community, or they are too native and thus their work is partial, subjective and political. Picking up on these binaries offered by Kilomba, particularly that of objectivity and subjectivity, I firmly reject this positivist approach to knowledge production acknowledging rather that positionality is a strong factor in all knowledge produced. Kirin Narayan calls for moving away from the insider/outsider dichotomy and proposes that shifting identities with "factors such as education, gender, sexual orientation, class, race…" also need to be considered. Narayan goes further and suggests that:

> What we (anthropologists) must focus our attention on is the quality of relations with the people we seek to represent in our texts: are they viewed as mere fodder for professional self-serving statements about a generalized Other, or are they accepted as subjects with voices, views, and dilemmas- people to whom we are bonded through ties of reciprocity ad who may even be critical of our professional enterprise (Narayan 1993, p.672)?

Narayan calls for the focus to be re-centered around the relationships of those we write about and rather than who is writing from the inside and who is writing from the outside. Through the use of "reciprocity", Narayan also implies a form of commitment from the researcher to the researched. Writing in the 1990s, when the notion of a politically engaged anthropologist was still considered "unsavoury, tainted, even frightening, Nancy Scheper-Hughes calls for a politically engaged form of scholarship that takes an "explicit ethical orientation to the other" (Narayan 1993, p.415/ p.418).

3.5 *The Scholar Activist*

My own research stems from a commitment to decolonising knowledge on Palestine and taking up Said's call for Palestinians to narrate their own story (Said 1984). I certainly make no claim to political neutrality or 'distance' in my work. For native/ Indigenous scholars this is an impossibility articulated well by Mohawk Kahnawake scholar Gerald Taiaiake Alfred;

> It has been said that being born Indian is being born into politics. I believe this to be true; because being born a Mohawk Kahnawake I do not remember a time free from the impact of political conflict (Alfred 1995, p.1).

The term 'scholar-activist' is being used more and more in the academy as a way in which to describe academics who are also heavily involved in or whose work is

heavily intertwined in political activism. Often, scholar activists are involved in the struggles of the communities and peoples they write about. This is not a new concept, even though the term is re-entering the lexicon. Indeed, in many contexts such as Latin America and Algeria the boundaries between scholars and revolutionaries were often blurred. The most obvious example is Frantz Fanon, who is so often referenced in scholarship on colonialism and settler colonialism for his analysis on the colonial condition. Yet Fanon was also an active member of the FLN and much of his writing offered a revolutionary praxis[6]. Similarly, there was a cohort of Palestinian scholars writing in the 1960s, who were producing scholarship from the PLO research centre including Sabri Jiriyis and Fayez Sayegh. For these scholars and many others, liberation, revolution and knowledge production was understood to be intimately connected.

Audra Lorde also recognised the need to be a scholar activist, particularly in the context of an academy that was and still is colonial and hetro-patriarchal. In 1979 at a conference commemorating the 30th anniversary of the publication of *The Second Sex* (1949) by Simone de Beauvoir, Lorde delivered what would become her best known speech. In it, she challenged the legitimacy of a conference in which women of colour and queer women were seriously underrepresented;

> It is a particular academic arrogance to assume any discussion of feminist theory without examining our many differences, and without a significant input from poor women, Black and Third World women, and lesbians (Lorde 1984, p.110).

[6] See Fanon's *Toward the African Revolution (1964),* for a powerful collection of essays and letters on revolution and revolutionary praxis.

Using her own experience as a black and queer woman, Lorde highlighted the need for scholar activism in order to challenge the overarching structures of dominance within spaces of knowledge production. Importantly she also challenged the notion of reform and put forward a radical feminist approach by stating that “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house (Lorde 1984, p.111). Being a scholar activist, in many ways, is not a choice for marginalized and oppressed people, rather it is born out of existential necessity. Importantly, scholar-activism must also extend beyond epistemic work and academic spaces, and this includes making sure that knowledge produced and reproduced has an impact “on the ground”.

3.6 *The importance of oral history research methods*

> How do you write…on Palestine and the Palestinians when the very act of writing about, giving voice to, or representing the Palestinians is beset by two larger, interrelated problems; first that Palestinian history tends to be viewed solely in relation to Israeli history or narrative: and second that the story of the Palestinians, as ordinary human beings subjected to violent forms of power, remains a largely hidden one (Matar 2011, p.xi).

Dina Matar’s rhetorical and reflexive questions on how to write on Palestine is reflective of some of the questions I asked on the outset of my doctoral research. How can I write about this community of Palestinians whilst centering and privileging their voices? Understanding knowledge production in the Foucauldian sense is crucial, knowledge is power and control over the hegemonic narrative has very real implications on the ground for Palestinians. Moving towards a more politically engaged scholarship requires us to consider in depth the lived realities of those communities which we study. In addition to the theoretical framing, an appropriate way to address this is through the undertaking of particular research methods that

seek to include and represent as much as possible the community one is writing about. The broader theme of this thesis is memory- a form of oral history- and so it seemed apt and logical that oral history would also form a large part of my methodological process.

The nature of oral history changed in the 20th century when recording sound became possible and later when tape recording devices became more widespread. However, it was not until the 1960s that academics became interested in recording stories other than those of the male elites (Yow 2005, p.3). Oral history itself provides a distinct opportunity for these non-elite groups. Writing in the context of the Palestinian citizens of Israel, Rhoda Kanaaneh and Isis Nusair explain:

> Oral history can provide a partial opportunity for subaltern groups to participate in the process of history writing, though not without the mediation of the researcher (Kanaaneh and Nusair 2010, p.121).

It is important to recognise this 'mediation' of the researcher as described by Kanaaneh and Nusair in oral history work, because although oral history adopts a bottom-up approach it is not free of hierarchal structures. Alessandro Portelli's work on the practice of using interviews and the role of the researcher and the research participant illuminates this well. He explains that oral testimony is a collaboration between the researcher and the person providing the account with the former interpreting what the latter's testimony (Portelli 1991). Recognizing power relations is an important part of the interview process. Class, gender, status, race, age, and education are but some of the things we need to take into account when interviewing an individual. Furthermore, there are many influences at work in terms of what information is shared and how it is processed or recorded. The relationship between

the researcher or interviewer and the research participant or interviewee used to be one of subject and object, but an increased understanding of this as problematic has led to more conscientious efforts by oral historians to view the interview as a collaboration from the outset. Valerie Raleigh Yow uses the concept or "shared authority" to explain this dynamic (Yow 2005, p.1)[7].

Oral history in qualitative research does not seek to represent the community studied with statistics from questionnaires as quantitative research might. Rather qualitative oral history acknowledges its limitations in terms of 'representation' and offers a more intimate look at how people interpret and reconstruct the past. Through the conversational and collaborative nature of an interview, we can often discover nuances and details we (as researchers) did not expect. Indeed, Yow argues that "the possibility of discovering something not even thought of before is an advantage of the method", but continues to warn that "generalizations about a wider population have to be held tentatively" (Yow 2005, p.11). In the face of oral history criticism, Portelli reminds us that even 'factually' incorrect statements hold a physiological truth and affirms that the "importance of oral testimony may often lie not in its adherence to facts by rather in its divergence from them, where imagination, symbolism, desire break in" (Portelli 1991, p.). This physiological truth refers to an experienced truth, Oral history in its very essence is subjective and it is this subjectivity that makes it so rich with meaning and multi-layered textual detail.

As an interdisciplinary research topic, combining anthropological and historical aspects, this thesis requires a multifaceted approach with a variety of qualitative

[7] Yow draws upon Michael Frisch's work on "shared authority". See Frisch, M. (1990) A shared Authority: Essays on the craft and meaning of oral and public history

research methods. These methods were primarily participant observation, both formal and informal interviews/ conversations and primary textual analysis.

3.7 Participant Observation

Participant observation allows the researcher to immerse oneself in the community they are researching. They share in everyday rituals and become accustomed to routines. Participant observation also helps set a context when it comes to the interviews, and can provide insight on nuances and even certain linguistic traits that might be specific to the area. Thus, not only is it a useful research method in itself, it can also compliment other research methods.

As I already mentioned, I spent the first three years of my PhD living in Jerusalem. My choice of location was because as an unfunded PhD student, I had to live where I could find work. It proved to be convenient base for me to travel to the north for my fieldwork, which I did so at weekends and on occasions when there was a particular event or meeting taking place. When I travelled north, I would often stay in Haifa spending time with the small community of Palestinians involved in activism and the NGO scene. Events that I attended included smaller activities organised at the destroyed villages, political meetings, social gatherings and larger events such as the annual March of Return and *Yom Tarshiha*.

In addition to a data collection technique, participant observation allowed me to build relationships with those in activist circles in Haifa and the Galilee. Rather than jumping in and out of the "field" for a few months at a time, I had a consistent and understated presence in these spaces.

3.8 Interviews and informal conversations

The individuals that participated in my research were all adult Palestinian citizens of Israel who identify as being from the Galilee or from Haifa. By definition, this does not include Arabs from the Occupied Golan Heights nor diaspora Palestinians who may live inside the1948 Territory but are without Israeli ID. I sought to speak to those who were involved or active in the oral history projects that I had previously identified but also those who were in general were active in the various NGOs that initiated these projects. The makeup of these people tended to be middle class and secular with many amongst them students and artists. I used the snowballing technique to identify possible participants for this research, relying on personal contacts and networks to put me in touch with individuals.

During the interviews, I begun by stating who I am, what my research is about and what my aims were. This was followed by the signing of an interview consent form where the participant agreed to take part in the research and for his/her data to be used in the writing of my thesis. Most of the interviews began with a few structured questions that led to a more conversational and life story approach. The 'life story' approach allows the narrator to take control of the conversation and control what knowledge is shared. Atkinson explains that a life story is:

> the story a person choses to tell about the life he has lived, told completely and honestly as possible, what is remembered of it, and what the teller wants to know of it, usually as a result of a guided interview by another (Atkinson 1998, p.8).

The conversational approach allowed for a natural flow of conversation, allowing the participant to digress whenever he/she chose. This method attempts to address the power structures inherent in qualitative research, but it also provided me with an

interesting insight into the way in which the participant chose to organize the narratives and stories shared with me.

In addition to the classic static interview, where researcher and participant sit opposite each other and exchange information, I intertwined walking and talking. In these conversations I would be led by my research participant and I attempted to allow the conversation flow with the surroundings. I occasionally took photos and as I tried to immerse myself in listening I would only write notes later that day (Anderson and Jack 1991). The informal chats I had with people took place in more natural settings usually during my participant observation fieldwork. I would naturally talk to those around me and often others would initiate the conversation. I do not take quotations from these conversations, but on occasion I do paraphrase and I have not felt it appropriate to identify the individuals from these conversations as I was not always able to explain that this would form part of my fieldwork.

3.9 Friends and key contacts

There are both advantages and disadvantages to when it comes to friends and family in the field of research. On the one hand, strong relationships with people have allowed me to make key connections and build a network of possible narrators. Their familiarity with me including which family I belong to and which village I come from increased their ease and trust in me as a researcher. It indeed allowed me to overcome many trust dichotomies that characterize some problems with fieldwork. On the other hand, this familiarity will have also affected the narratives they shared with me and the way they talked about certain people and events. For example, they may not have wished to share certain stories with someone who knows their community, or they may share information that they think I would like to hear.

My key contacts were the people that I relied upon more heavily than others to put me in touch with people to interview and to keep me up to date with events taking place. They would become 'key' naturally through developing friendships. I remained aware that this obscuring of the line between research participant and friend could be seen as opportunistic. Nonetheless, it was difficult to refute a friendship on this basis and I was vigilant not to exploit them.

Another factor that I was concerned with, was the safety of those participating in my research. Palestinian citizens of Israel are an oppressed indigenous minority and there have been increasingly Orwellian curbs to their freedom of speech. Their safety is certainly not a given and in recent years individuals have been arrested for social media posts. However, I did not find that this had an effect on the willingness of people to partake in the interviews. Indeed, the people I have been interviewing are already active and publically involved in commemorative and political activities. On occasion a research participant has requested that I omit something from the interview, which I did without question. All those involved in my research are given assurances with regards to the safety of the data and their anonymity if they so wish it.

3.10 Primary research materials

Throughout my research period I have used primary textual research materials to compliment and even inform my participant observation and interviews. This included a lot of material from social media where I would gather up to date information about events, but would also be the site of a lot of discussions and negotiations. This material also included leaflets from various gatherings and demonstrations.

4 Historical background

We are staying, we are staying, as long as the za'atar and olives remain. *Samidoun, Samidoun, ma baqiyya za'atar wa Zeitoun*

(Palestinian activist chant popular in the 1948 territory)

4.8 Palestine Remembered

Palestine before 1948 and as it is often remembered by its people, was a country in the full throws of modernisation with a thriving urban scene and an idyllic rural life. Indeed, this romantic image of pre 1948 Palestine dominates not only the collective memory but also permeates literature and art[8]. One poem that encapsulates this idyllic rural landscape is by Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, a Palestinian poet who lived in exile in Iraq following the 1948 Nakba:

Our Palestine, green land of ours
Its flowers as if embroidered on women's gowns,
Its march adorns the hills
With roses and narcissus,
Its April bursts the plains
With flowers and bride like blossoms
Its May is our rustic song
That we sing at noon in the blue shadows
Among the olive trees in the valleys,
We await in the ripeness of the field the promise of July
And the Dabka dance amidst the harvest (Ibrahim Jabra 1990, p.75-76)

[8] See the literary works of Ibrahim Nasrallah (2012) and Ghassan Kanafani (1984), as well as various autobiographies by Ghada Karmi (2002), Salwa Salem (2006) and Khalil Sakakini (2010).

Ibrahim Jabra's nostalgic words emphasises the seasonal and harvest focused nature of Palestinian agrarian society whilst also paying dues to the two important markers of Palestinian contemporary identity; the olive tree and the Dabka dance.

In the 19th century, although made up of three separate administrative entity under the Ottomans, Palestine was very much part of 'Greater Syria' especially in terms of its social patterns, culture and terrain. To this day, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria are collectively known as *bilad as-sham.* At the time, much of the population was made up of an autonomous rural peasantry, "divided into factions based on clan alliances and relations of patronage with urban landlords and notables" (Tamari 2009, p.5). This rural life however was intimately connected to the urban centres through trade and commerce. During the latter Ottoman period, Palestine saw many more foreign travellers particularly those who came as missionaries. In their conversion efforts, these missionaries set up schools, hospitals and consulates as well as producing over 3000 books and travelogues on Palestine. This literature was heavily responsible for painting the image of a primitive land in need of European salvation (Pappe 2006, p.34). That 'salvation' came when General Allenby occupied Jerusalem in 1917 and several years later the Mandate of Palestine was established.

The British Mandate period saw the growth of the Palestinian merchant class and urban bourgeoisie, particularly in the coastal cities which also coincided with a growth in industry. Using the Royal Commission Report of 1936, Salim Tamari challenges the notion that during this period the Jewish industry of the new European immigrants dwarfed its Arab counter-part. Quoting from the report he states that in fact Arab urban production formed an "appreciable contribution to the industry of Palestine" which included the manufacturing of soap and textiles (Tamari 2009, p.9). In addition to burgeoning industries, the urban scene in Palestine was also becoming more

politicised and nationalised. This nationalism accelerated after the Balfour Declaration, clashing with the European Zionist settlers' claims and reaching a peak in 1936 with the 'Great Revolt' (Pappe 2006, p.179-105).

Despite the ethnic cleansing that had already been taking place, on the eve before the Zionist forces declared independence, "the urban as well as the rural landscape was still very Arab and Palestinian" (Pappe 2011, p.16). However the military and political strength lay in the hands of the Zionists and in May 1948 Israel established itself as a Jewish State in around 80 percent of former Palestine. This establishment succeeded with the ethnic cleansing of 750,000 Palestinians who became refugees in neighboring Arab countries (Pappe 2011, p.18). In addition to the removal of most of the Palestinian people from the land, the Zionist forces also destroyed many of their villages, towns and traces of city life. Elias Sandbar described 1948 as follows:

> That year, a country and its people disappeared from maps and dictionaries…henceforth the Palestinians would be referred to by general, conveniently vague, terms as either 'refugees', or in the case of a small minority that had managed to escape the generalized expulsion, 'Israeli Arabs', a long absence was beginning (Sanbar 2007, p. 87-94).

Indeed 1948 was a complete catastrophe for Palestinian society. It was disintegrated, dispersed and the community and village based life that Palestinians once knew had changed forever. Yet this violent upheaval and destruction was overshadowed by the birth of Israel, internationally perceived as something morally good after the evils of World War II. As Sanbar explains, Palestine's destruction was not only physical it was also an epistemic one which saw it being removed from historical discourse.

4.9 Those that remained

Walid Khalidi's '*All That Remains'* documents the over 400 villages that were destroyed or depopulated during 1948. This extensive work relies on fieldwork and testimonies from the village descendants to identify not only their exact locations but also for statistical data on their social and economic make up before 1948 (Khalidi 2006). But of course it was not only the ruins of a built landscape that remained, there were also the remnants of a society. These remnants were about 150,000 Palestinians, approximately ten per cent of the entire Palestinian population, who for a multitude of reasons managed to stay on the land. In unprecedented work historian Adel Mana explores the reasons for survival in the Galilee which included villages with mixed populations of Christians and Druze, villages which surrendered and were spared and those that were depopulated but whose residents were allowed to return after the fighting (Mana 2017). The Palestinians that remained found themselves in a completely new state, "frightened, confused, disorientated and more than anything else traumatised", with photos from this period laying testament to that[9] (Pappe 2011, p.18). They went from a majority population to a minority one in a self-proclaimed ethnically Jewish state. This new minority community was concentrated in the Galilee, the central Triangle area and a few Bedouin populations in the Naqab. In the mixed cities such as Haifa, the surviving Palestinians were rounded up into ghettos to be kept under watchful eyes. There were also those who were internally displaced, the *muhajareen*, who would be sheltered not too far from their villages of origin.

In the first few months following the establishment of Israel, its leaders talked seriously and determinedly about forcibly transferring the remaining Palestinians to

[9] See Ariella Azoulay's curated photobook 'From Palestine to Israel' (2011)

Lebanon, Syria or Jordan. There was also a planned operation, although never implemented, which would use the context of a war to mass expel the remaining Palestinians. Indeed this nearly materialised in 1956 during Israel's Sinai campaign (Pappe 2011, p.53). The concept of 'transfer' is heavily rooted in Zionist ideology and goes back to the late 19th century which maintained that forcible transfer of the Arabs would be crucial to Zionist success (Masalha 1992). These initial discussions on transfer set the tone for what would be a continuing discourse or threat of transferring the 'Arab' population of Israel to the West Bank. In 2002, an Israeli right-wing organisation, *Gamla*, even produced detailed transfer plans (Rempel 2002), and much more recently Israel's foreign minister (at the time of writing) Avigdor Lieberman suggested offering incentives for Palestinians to leave the State of Israel (Lieberman 2014).

As the Zionist project successfully established Israel, Palestine was erased and the "Palestinians" became known as solely a refugee population. Those that remained would be disregarded as Palestinians not only by Israel and its Western allies, but also by Arab countries even though many of them took up the Palestinian national liberation movement as a *cause célèbre*. The understanding of the Nakba was limited to an event responsible for the mass exile of Palestinians and not as a continuing process of elimination.

4.10 Military Rule Period

The new Jewish state established a military regime, based on the Emergency Regulations introduced by the British Mandate authorities, to watch over the Palestinians (Ghanem 2001, p.19). It lasted until 1966 but would determine the long-term nature of Arab-Jewish relations until the present day. As'ad Ghanem identifies

three main considerations the new state had for this population. First was the consideration of security, indeed the Palestinians were perceived as a fifth column and that state thought that it was quite possible for them to participate in an attack against it. Second, was the fact that the state had declared itself as Jewish and Zionist and yet here were 150,000 non-Jewish and non-Zionist residents. The third and final consideration identified by Ghanem would come later and that was that Israel was attempting to portray itself as a democratic and liberal state, which would mean that it would have to at least look like it was giving equality to the Palestinians (Ghanem 2001, p.18-19). During the military regime, that state was focused on security first and foremost. The Palestinian population had to be monitored to make sure they were not organising to undermine the state. There were many mechanisms in place to do this which limited their freedom of movement and their political expression. In order to leave their registered village or town, Palestinians had to obtain permits from the local police station. This included trips to see doctors, to go to neighbouring markets or even to see nearby relatives. Arab nationalism was banned in all its forms and most Palestinian newspapers which flourished during the Mandate period were closed down. The Palestinian community were dependent on the state and this dependence was maintained by appropriating land and placing restrictions on the production of agriculture. The state also bribed and co-opted people into collaboration by granting them travel permits or jobs within state institutions (Lustick 1980, p.200-232).

In the initial period following the establishment of Israel, the state was particularly worried about expelled Palestinians who might try and return. At the beginning of 1949 Prime Minister Ben-Gurion called for a “War on infiltration” against these returnees which would last seven years (Robinson 2013, p.74). The front line of this

war was in the Galilee where the border had yet to be secured because of the “army’s scanty intelligence, poor coordination, and dearth of troops” (Robinson 2013, p.77). This war included flying checkpoints on the roads, village raids before dawn and general spreading of panic among communities. Palestinians were terrorised during this period, indeed many of them were unregistered because they had missed the registration census or more commonly it had missed them. Many people were expelled during this period and there was also a “targeting of internal refugees” as they were among the most vulnerable. However, there was also Palestinian agency during this period with attempts to reverse their expulsion in what Shira Robinson calls “sheer determination of thousands of Palestinians to come home” (Robinson 2013, p.76-77). There were approximately one thousand returnees a month for the first half of 1949, and an additional one thousand were shot and killed along the border by the end of the year. This historical narrative brought forward by Robinson, counters claims that Palestinians had no attachment to the land or that they abandoned their country too easily. The determination to return for many Palestinians was present from the genesis of their expulsion.

The military rule period was characterised by the new Israeli state trying to bring the registered Palestinian population under full control and submission. However, in the 1950s there were still some regions considered problematic. In 1956 towards the end of October, the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), in its preparation for its invasion of the Sinai Peninsula, sought about securing the border along the Jordanian armistice line. One of the measures was a curfew imposed on the Palestinian villages situated along this border and Kafr Qasim was one of the villages. The curfew was set at 10pm, but on the 29th of October the commander in charge of this area received oral orders from above to move the curfew earlier to 5pm and to ‘shoot to kill’ everyone found outside

after the curfew. The IDF only informed the *mukhtar* (the head of the village) 30 minutes prior to the new curfew and as such many villagers were not informed in time. In a horrific display of brutal force, the IDF mowed down nearly fifty men women and children (Robinson 2013, p.160-161). When news of the atrocity spread, Tawfiq Tubi, Palestinian Communist member of the Knesset, visited the village and collected oral testimonies from survivors and witnesses and published an article in spite of the military censorship and imposed gag order (Pappe 2011, p.57). In an attempt to placate the villagers, the state offered compensation, arrested some soldiers and set up a *sulha* (Bedouin reconciliation ceremony) which was considered by many as a farce. This massacre has since been commemorated annually by the village. Just two years after the event, three poets- Mahmoud Darwaish, Samih al Qasim and Hanna Abu Hanna were imprisoned after taking part in a commemorative ceremony. Rather ironically whilst in prison the poets wrote poems about the massacre that would continue to be recited to this day (Khleif and Slyomovics 2008, p.202). Kafr Qasim was the site of dramatic and horrific violence towards the Palestinian citizens that had not been seen since the Deir Yassin massacre a decade previously. It became a shared national experience that epitomised so well the state's disposable attitude towards them. In the village itself, a memorial tombstone was erected in 1976 at the entrance to the village and in 2006 a museum was also built to tell the story of the massacre.

Writing in 1976 prior to the events of Land Day, Sabri Jiryis summed up this period from Deir Yassin to Kafr Qassim, writing that contrary to Israel's hopes, the Palestinian identity did not disappear:

> Israel's suppression of Arab national rights cannot hope to succeed in the long run. Opposition or denial of such rights has only led to a sharp increase in nationalist

> feelings; the racism implied in the Zionist emphasis on such ideas as the chosen people and the land of Israel has only inflamed popular feeling. At first Israeli policy relied heavily on time, in the belief that the Palestinian Arabs, both inside and outside Israel, would eventually lose their national identity and be assimilated into societies they happened to be living in. But events have proceeded to the contrary…Israel does not seem to have benefited from its experiences with the Palestinians. Its policies have helped to keep the Palestine problem alive both inside and outside Israel (Jiriyis 1976, p.239).

In the early days of the Israeli state, the only avenue for Palestinians wanting to be openly political was through the Israeli Communist Party (ICP). The ICP followed the political stance of the Soviet Union, which had accepted the UN General Assembly's Resolution 181 (the partition plan). As such, there was not much questioning of the Zionist project and the legitimacy of the establishment of Israel. By 1967 it had become "the most significant political force within the Palestinian minority" (Pappe 2011, p.69). Through the ICP it was possible to express Palestinian identity albeit in a limited way. The party's literature would enable the re-emergence of Palestinian culture in the public sphere, although of course in a non-politically explicit manner (Rohana and Sabbagh-Khoury 2017, p.403). It would later transform into Hadash, a coalition between the ICP and other far left groups. Another political movement, al Ard, appeared in the late 1950s and was inspired by Gamal Abdel Nasser's pan-Arabism. Unlike the ICP, it was clear in that it saw Zionism as a racist ideology (Ghanem 2001, p.108). Poetry was also a means of Palestinian cultural expression during this period, particularly as occasionally it managed to circumvent both Israeli and Party censorship.

4.11 Land Day and its legacy

In 1966 the military regime was lifted and a year later following the occupation of the West bank and Gaza (an event known as *al Naksa)* it was imposed on the Palestinian communities in those territories. Although initially movement between all the territories was restricted, it was not long before Palestinians across the Green Line were able to share their experiences and stories for the first time since 1948 with each other on mass. Interestingly this reunification revealed two conflicting political agendas between the Palestinian communities. The West Bank and Gaza was focused on liberation from the Israeli occupation whilst the Palestinians in the 1948 Territory were struggling for equality within the Jewish State (Pappe 2011, p.113). An equality that would never be achieved.

Another political movement that arose among the Palestinian citizens was Abnaa el Balad which emerged out of student organising in the late 60s and 70s. They defined themselves as secular and Palestinian and the movement was similar in ideology to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). They advocated for a one Arab, secular and democratic state in all of historic Palestine. Although they boycotted elections for the Knesett, they took part in local municipal elections and enjoyed a fair amount of support during the First Intifada. Abnaa el Balad was also one of the groups involved in organising the first major collective act of civil disobedience against the state from the Palestinian citizens in 1976, in an event known as *Yom el Ard* (Land Day). The prelude to this event was a confidential report (later leaked to the press) by an official within the Ministry of Interior, Yisrael Koenig, who writing on the "demographic problem" (the Arabs) recommended the following to the government:

> Expand and deepen Jewish settlement in areas where the contiguity of the Arab population is prominent…examine the possibility of diluting existing Arab population concentrations. Special attention must be paid to border areas in the country's northwest and to the Nazareth region (Koenig 1976, p.12).

Within the report he stated that "the Israeli Arabs are no longer passive" and explained this increased politicisation as a result of the reunification of Palestinians across the Green Line and the recognition of the PLO (Koenig 1976, p.11). Following the Koenig report, the government announced plans to confiscate 20,000 dunams of land under the "Developing the Galilee Programme" at the beginning of March (Pappe 2011, p.129). Following this announcement, Palestinians mobilised under the leadership of the Committee for the Defence of Arab Lands which had been established jointly by various student bodies, Abnaa el Balad and the Communist Party. They decided to hold a mass strike and protest not only the land appropriation but also the situation of the Palestinian community in the 1948 territory in general on the last day of March. Although there were also protests in the Naqab and Wadi Ara, most of the action took place in six villages in the Galilee which had been placed under curfew- Sakhnin, Arraba, Deir Hanna, Tur'an, Tamra, and Kabul. The demonstrations were met with serious aggression and violence from the Israeli police, who shot and killed six demonstrators and injured hundreds more (Pappe 2011, p.129). Both the government and the Israeli public were unsympathetic to the demonstrators and the general grievances of the Palestinian citizens of Israel. *Yom el Ard* clearly demonstrated to the Palestinian citizens that they were nowhere close to achieving equality and that the State of Israel was determined to continue appropriating land for the benefit and exclusive use of the Jewish people.

Yom el Ard became a major date in the national Palestinian political calendar and an important event in the collective narrative. It has become a date in which Palestinians in Palestine and the diaspora organise land based activities whilst emphasising their ontological relationship with the land. Within the 1948 Territory, *Yom el Ard* emphasises the concept of *sumud* (steadfastness) as an important part of resistance to Israeli colonisation of the land. As such, many internally displaced refugees return to their destroyed villages of origin with some working on the land and others simply having a gathering with food and storytelling. The chant quoted at the beginning of this section epitomises this concept of *sumud* and its link with the land; "We are staying, we are staying as long as the za'atar and olives remain".

4.12 Uprisings and civil society

The First Intifada began in the refugee camps of Gaza and spread to the West Bank shortly after. In response to the uprising, demonstrations were organised inside the 1948 Territory where "for the first time political action was coordinated between Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line". This was followed by organised collecting of food, clothes and medication for those in the occupied territories (Pappe 2011, p.174). Although perhaps not materially significant, this coordination between the geographically divided Palestinian communities was symbolically important. The Second-Intifada in 2000 proved to be another turning point in relations between the Palestinian citizens, Jewish Israelis and the State. The violence unleashed upon the Palestinians during the Second Intifada, killing 13, demonstrated yet again that they were less than second-class citizens. To add insult to injury the Or Commission, which was launched after the killings and which criticized the policies and attitudes towards the 'Israeli Arabs', was completely ignored. In addition to clearly depicting

the institutional racism, the report of the Or Commission rather astoundingly asserted the indigeneity of the Palestinian citizens:

> The Arab minority in Israel is an indigenous population, which views itself as being subject to the hegemony of a non-native majority. In the customary distinction in the professional literature between "indigenous minorities" and "immigrant minorities", the Arab minority in Israel clearly belongs to the first category (Mossawa 2007, p.20).

The distinction was unprecedented and although ignored by the Israeli government and public alike, this report would later be used by Palestinian civil society and in particular in the Future Vision Documents of 2006-2007. The re-election of Arial Sharon as Prime Minister the following year and his continued use of brutal force in the West Bank added to the increasing feelings of frustration and despair from the Palestinian citizens (Jamal 2008b, p.6).

The period after the First Intifada gave rise to political Islamism and inside the 1948 Territory this was embodied in the Islamic Movement. The Movement was more dominant in the Triangle and Wadi Ara areas, which were (and still are) more economically deprived that the Galilee. In the late 1980s and early 1990s the movement defeated Communist politicians in various municipal elections. These local politics of the 1990s however were soon overshadowed by the much bigger and international political discourse of the Oslo Accords. Having been partly included in Palestinian movement's national discourse in the 1970s and 1980s, the Palestinian citizens of Israel would see themselves being totally excluded from these international peace negotiations between Israel and the 'Palestinians' (Pappe 2011, p.135-170). In an attempt to make a political impact various political groups joined forces in 1996 to form *Tajamu* (block in Arabic) headed by Azmi Bishara. This included some from Abnaa al Balad, which had split into two groups, with one joining Bishara and the

other remaining independent. Bishara ran in the Knesset elections that year and won a seat in which he would serve for eleven years (Pappe 2011, p.148).

Despite the efforts by *Tajamu*, party politics working within the state system had yet to satisfy national aspirations of the Palestinian community in the 1948 Territory. As such, the 1990s saw a revitalization of the community's collective consciousness and collective narrative focusing on their experience of survival in the public sphere (Koldas 2011, p.947). This public sphere was the space occupied by civil society organisations that were multiplying rapidly in order to serve the social, economic and political needs of the Palestinian community.[10] This period also saw a shift in the *raison d' **ê**tre* of these organisations who previously had been mostly focused on welfare and now were moving towards political mobilization. In 1995 Ittijah was founded as the umbrella organisation for all the Palestinian NGOs within the State of Israel. Based in Haifa, Ittijah undertakes grassroots organising to maintain networks between the Palestinian NGOs but also to create links on an international level. Ittijah was also founded as a defensive measure against the highly restrictive and enshrined web of legislation that targets Palestinian mobilization.

Civil society in Israel is regulated by the Registrar of Associations and within this office there is a special department for Arab organisations which is given wide authority to impose restrictions (Payes 2005, p.232). Appeals to the Supreme Court against these restrictions are a lengthy and costly process which most Palestinian NGOs cannot afford. In addition, these organisations have been the subject of specific targeting by Shin Bet the Israeli Security Services (Payes 2005, p.232). Recently there have been

[10] The literature on Palestinian civil society in Israel is a rather undeveloped area of scholarship. Scholars such as Dan Rabinowitz, Shany Payes, Oded Haklai, and Amal Jamal have perhaps been the most comprehensive (Rabinowitz 2001, Payes 2003, Haklai 2004, Jamal 2008a).

Orwellian curbs on Palestinian organisations, particularly those focusing on commemoration and memory. These curbs include what is being deemed colloquially as the "Nakba Law". The Nakba law is an amendment to the budget foundations law (1985). It allows the minister of finance to withdraw state-funding to an organisation that challenges the existence of Israel as a 'Jewish and democratic state' and/ or if it marks Israel's Independence Day as a day of mourning (Adalah 2011a). The "Foreign Government Funding Law" also targets Palestinian NGOs. The Law's declared purpose is transparency however Adalah asserts that it is tactic used to discourage foreign government funding of Palestinian NGO's, in particular human rights NGOs (Adalah 2011b). The targeting of Palestinian civil society by the Israeli state has been a calculated attempt to weaken the community socially and politically. Civil society is one of the few spaces in which counter hegemonic narratives and actions can take place. Indeed, the Palestinian political calendar inside Israel today has become crowded with memorial days and events marking different points in Palestinian history thanks in a large part to these civil society organisations.[11] In recognition of the dangers posed to the state's hegemony, the Israeli authorities also target individuals involved in this space. Most notably in 2010 when Israeli security agents arrested Amir Makhoul, the chair of Ittijah, on charges that he had been spying for Hezbollah. He was found guilty after a confession that was obtained under duress and sentenced to nine years in prison. Amnesty International condemned the arrest and stated that his lengthy sentence was likely due to his many years of activism (Amnesty International 2011). In a similar fashion, Omar Barghouti, the co-founder of the BDS Movement has also been subject to harassment, arrest and interrogation.

[11] See Sorek, T., (2015), Palestinian Commemoration in Israel: Calendars, monuments and martyrs, for a comprehensive mapping of commemorative events and those involved in their organising in the 1948 Territory.

In addition to the political parties, an extra parliamentary organisation called the 'High Follow-Up Committee' was established in the years following Land Day. The Committee included the main leaders from the community including those in civil society and from the four major political streams (Communists, nationalists, Zionist affiliated and Islamic) (Rouhana 1989, p.52). Although lacking in political cohesion, its collective organising ability was demonstrated on various occasions and perhaps most notably in its organisation of the three nation-wide strikes between 1987-1988 in support of the First Intifada (Rouhana 1989, p.54). It would also go on to play a contributing role in the publication of the Future Vision Documents (mentioned in the following sub section).

4.13 Collective manifestations

Since 2000 there has been a surge of public cultural activities from the Palestinian community in the 1948 Territory. These activities include art, cinema and theatre in which the Palestinian experience within the State of Israel is explored and illuminated in all of its multiple layers. Many of these activities are political in their very nature of expressing Palestinian identity and a Palestinian narrative.

In a political context of frustration of marginalisation from the Palestinian national movement in the West Bank and increasing oppression from the state, a series of documents emerged from the Palestinian citizens that would "…constitute a watershed in the history of Jewish-Arab relations in Israel" (Rekhess 2007, p.25). Between 2006-2007 four documents were published as a collaborative effort from politicians, intellectuals and civil society. '*The Future Vision Document*', '*An Equal Constitution for All*', '*The Democratic Constitution*' and '*The Haifa Declaration*' collectively have become known as 'The Future Vision Documents' (hereafter the

FVDs). These documents not only lay out the social and political demands of the Palestinian community in Israel, they also put forward a concise Palestinian narrative. The documents also assert the community's national and Indigenous identity as well as its affiliation with the Arab world (The Future Vision 2006, p.5). The result was a theoretical and structured framework for empowerment. Taken as the common view of most of the political and intellectual leadership of the community, the documents call upon the State of Israel to abandon its Jewish character and to embrace all its citizens. Obviously the FVDs did not present new ideas, but they did consolidate what Palestinian academics, organisers and activists have been calling for, for decades with a clear picture of what they imagined for the future. As a collective product of the intellectual class and activists, the documents affirm the deep involvement of civil society in collective Palestinian life within the State of Israel (Amal, 2008a, p.284).

Another collective action took shape in the form of the Joint List in the 2015 Knesset elections. This was the first time all the major Arab parties joined together on a single list and they did so in the hope to prevent Netanyahu from forming a government. The Joint List was headed by Ayman Odeh and won a total of 13 seats making it the third largest party in the Knesset. They managed to mobilise two thirds of Palestinian citizens to vote, which lead to Netanyahu making a last bid attempt to Jewish Israeli voters. In a Facebook post he released a video saying the following:

> The right-wing government is in danger. Arab voters are heading to the polling stations in droves…Left-wing NGOs are bringing them in buses (Zonszein 2015).

Netanyahu revealed a momentary panic among the ruling political class at the increase in Arab voters. Indeed the Joint List had hoped that their increase in seats would help them be able to prevent racist bills such as the 2012 Prawer Plan which

seeks to relocate 90,000 Bedouins living in unrecognised villages in the Naqab. Unfortunately however, Netanyahu cemented a coalition deal that would see the formation of Israel's most right-wing government to date. The Joint List has currently little power to prevent or overturn racist legislation that targets the Palestinian citizens.

The afore mentioned government Prawer Plan received a lot of media attention in 2013. Particularly because on the 30 November, the day before the Knesset's second vote on the plan, a collective day of rage was organised by activists around the country and across the Green Line. Demonstrations were held in Gaza, Bir al Saba', Ramallah, Jerusalem, Jaffa, Bethlehem and the Galilee in solidarity with the Naqab Bedouin facing displacement. Activists reported being sent letters by the Shin Bet prior to the demonstrations warning them not to take part. The demonstrations in Hura (a village in the Naqab) and Haifa faced the most police brutality and saw over 50 activists arrested (Khalife 2013). The images from these protests inside of Israel were shocking as they showed brutal measures taken by Israeli authorities that are usually seen at West Bank demonstrations not in *al dakhl*. Police forces were spraying demonstrators in Haifa with water cannons and in Hura, they were attacking the protesters with tear gas. These collective political manifestations across the Green Line were met with the same repression from the Israeli authorities, and it is this same repression that unifies the Palestinian experience.

5 Conclusion

The Palestinian community in the 1948 Territory is by no means politically coherent, neither does it maintain a singular rigid identity. They are divided along lines of religion, class, politics, gender etc. just as any other community or society. However, this section has showed that there are commonalities to their experience, that distinguish them from the other fragments of Palestinian society. The defining moment in Palestinian time, 1948, saw their transformation from a majority group to a minority group in a settler state forced upon them. Whilst many of their brethren were forced into exile, they remained on the physical site of the Nakba and the ethnic cleansing. This fact is an important and defining one, their physical presence on their land (albeit facing many limitations) has influenced their identity and their collective narrative which is so heavily influenced by oral histories and memories. Indeed, memory plays a huge role in their assertiveness as a community.

This assertiveness was not always present, as explained in this historical background, Palestinian identity was initially dormant in the years that followed 1948 due to the military regime but also because of the community's isolation from other Palestinians and from the Arab World. Rouhana argues that this dormancy provided an opportune moment for Israel to create an "alternative Israeli identity in this population, based on equality with, and integration within, Israeli society" (Rouhana 1989, p.45). Although this assumption that inclusion for non-Jews in Israel could be 'full' and equal is rather optimistic, Rouhana points to an important and maybe even an uncomfortable characteristic in the development of Palestinian-ness inside the 48 borders. The exclusion and segregation between the settler population and the surviving Indigenous population, allowed for an assertive Palestinian identity and narrative to develop without being assimilated into the settler structure. At the same

time, the imposition of the settler structure's spatial and temporal boundaries has also shaped and hindered these expressions. This has forced Palestinians to develop creative ways in which to carve out spaces inside the Israeli State and within the 1948 Territory.

The chapters that follow will illuminate how oral history and Indigenous resistance are fundamental to the Palestinian experience and will particularly look at spaces in Haifa and the Galilee. This thesis will conclude by demonstrating how Palestinians in the 1948 Territory are engaging in a memory practice that is future orientated, with a potential to contribute to the process of decolonization.

Figure 2.

Figure 3.

Chapter Two

Literature Review and conceptual framework

1. Introduction

> I am scared of a history that has only one version. History has dozens of versions, and for it to ossify into one leads only to death (Khoury 2007, p.297).

The above excerpt is taken from Elias Khoury's *Bab el Shams* (Gate of the sun) and was among one of the first novels to describe the events of 1948 from a Palestinian perspective. Khoury's relativist understanding of history is important particularly in the case of Palestine where for so long, the Zionist historical narrative dominated global discourse on the events of the Nakba. History does indeed have many versions and oral history is but one method in which these many versions are gathered and presented. In the context of Indigenous communities, where the ongoing settler invasions are in a constant process of eliminating indigenous knowledge and indigenizing the settler narrative, oral history proves to be an important tool.

This chapter reviews literature on the Nakba, the Palestinian citizens of Israel highlighting the commonalities of their experience and also those characteristics which make it distinct. It also traces recent trends in Palestine Studies which have focused on the settler colonial analytic and the framing of Palestinians as an Indigenous people. Mapping these trends and drawing on literature from the wider field of Indigenous Studies, this chapter demonstrates the empirical and political importance of situating Palestine within this field. This chapter also addresses broader literature on oral history and memory, before looking more specifically at its development and institutionalization in the Palestinian case. It ends in a conceptual

framework which emphasizes Palestinian memory politics as a form of indigenous resistance, thus tying together the threads between these areas of literature.

2. The Nakba narrative

2.1 Epistemic erasure

In 1948 Israel not only conquered and appropriated the physical space of Palestine, it also conquered the epistemic space in which Palestine was being continuously reproduced. The first casualty in this space was the very word 'Palestine' which was not only erased from the maps but also from historical record. Indeed many written documents, private libraries and archives were confiscated or destroyed by the new Israeli state. In a documentary entitled '*The Great Book Robbery'*, filmmakers Benny Brunner and Arjan El Fassed reveal how this looting of books and documents was a premeditated plan by the Haganah (Brunner and Fassed 2012). Following the 1948 Nakba, Palestinians were relegated to the status of a refugee problem rather than a people who suffered a huge trauma of mass displacement and social upheaval. In the after math of this rupture, the historical narrative of the Zionist movement reigned supreme and achieved international legitimization. This narrative asserted that Palestine was the ancient homeland of the Jewish people and that against all odds, the Zionist pioneers had established a modern state in a people-less desert. This narrative was supported by not only the afore mentioned biblical sources, but also a host of maps, atlases and a cadre of Zionist historians determined to legitimize their claim (Pappe 2014, p.22-25).

In contrast, Palestinians had been dispersed and their institutions destroyed. A strong Palestinian narrative struggled to re-emerge, especially because mainstream historical discourses still favored written documents over oral sources. The dismissal

of Palestinian oral testimonies as evidence for what happened in 1948 was perhaps most monumentally manifested by Israeli New Historian Benny Morris and his revisiting of his seminal work *'The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem'*. In it he proclaims:

> The value of oral testimony about 1948, if anything, has diminished with the passage of the 20 years since I first researched the birth of the Palestinian refugee problem. Memories have further faded and acquired memories, ideological precepts and political agendas have grown if anything more intractable; intifadas and counter-intifadas have done nothing for the cause of salvaging historical truth (Morris 2004, p.4).

For Morris, memories and testimonies lose value and credibility over time. He also accuses them of acquiring ideological and political agendas and thus the over reliance on oral history by Palestinians renders their narratives both less reliable and less 'factual'. In his work, Morris demonstrates the immense difficulty that the Palestinian narrative faced for many decades. Israel was the main producer of documented evidence about the 1948 Nakba, claiming both objectivity and historicity whilst simultaneously dismissing Palestinian oral history and memory as unreliable. The case of the massacre at Tantura is also a prime example of the dismissal of Palestinian oral testimony. In May 1948 Tantura, a coastal village, was ethnically cleansed by the Alexandaroni Brigade who committed a massacre which saw between 200-250 villagers killed (Esmeir 2007, p.231). The testimonies from survivors were documented and written into a thesis chapter by Theodore Katz, an MA student at the University of Haifa. Veterans of the Brigade sued Katz for libel and a court case ensued. The case against him rested on the argument that the memories were inconsistent and therefore unreliable. In the end an out of court settlement was

reached. Writing on the case, Samera Esmeir discusses this dismissal of Palestinian oral history within the realms of positivist historiography:

> But if history and law were concerned with understanding as opposed to establishing facts, these memories would become "admissible." Memories of death would be understood on their terms- not as fragments of a story, but as narratives that were structured under conditions they are expected to describe. Incoherence, contradictions, and absences should then be understood as signifiers of something that is still present- the death of human relationships, the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, and the destruction of an entire society. This entails a different reading of the testimonies- a reading that would try to understand the tragedy of a society in the absences and gap (Esmeir 2007, p.249).

However, despite this, a Palestinian Nakba narrative did emerge from the ashes in both oral and written form. The first written work on 1948 was published in 1956 in Arabic by the Syrian intellectual Constantine Zurayq. He was one of the first to term what happened in 1948 as the Nakba in his book '*The Meaning of Disaster'* (Zurayq 1956). In 1965 the Palestinian Research Center was established in Beirut and set about conducting academic research and collecting books and documents on Palestine. The center was targeted by Israel on several occasions, most notably during the 1982 invasion of West Beirut by the Israeli army. The army ransacked the building and looted some of the collections. In an interview with Salah Qallab, the director of the center Sabri Jiriyis defiantly confirmed that they had retrieved most of the looted items (Qallab 1985, p.186). However recently, an Israeli archivist exposed that an enormous amount of visual materials (photos and films) that had been most likely looted in the 1982 invasion, are still sitting in the IDF archives (Haaretz 2017).

The *Journal of Palestine Studies* in Beirut and the *Arab Studies Quarterly* were amongst the non-governmental institutions that started to publish pioneering articles on interviews and memories from the Nakba including from the Palestinians in the 1948 Territory (Masalha 2012, p.215). In 1984, Edward Said published his pivotal article '*Permission to Narrate*'. Written in reaction to Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, Said calls for a critical re-examination of the Zionist narrative and historical record. Even after the horrific scenes of indiscriminate bombing by Israel, much of international community still retained that Israel was a civilized and democratic country. Said argued that this was made possible through institutionalized mechanisms, particularly in the media, that stop any adverse narratives about Israel being published. Said says that "facts do not at all speak for themselves, but require a socially acceptable narrative to absorb, sustain and circulate them" (Said 1984, p.34). Said's Gramscian analysis of the hegemonic narrative demonstrates that the representation of Israel since its establishment has enabled the total marginalization of any Palestinian voices in the mainstream West. Moreover, "the Palestinian narrative has never been officially admitted to Israeli history, except as that of non-Jews" (Said 1984, p.33). Certainly up until the advent of revisionist history by the New Historians, Palestinians in Israeli academic discourse were simply the 'other' with no notable history.

The systematic destruction of the Palestinian landscape also assisted the Zionist project in marginalizing the Palestinian narrative. In his book '*Sacred Landscape'* (2002), Benvenisti discusses this elimination of a narrative through the method of renaming. He provides a comprehensive analysis of the Jewish National Fund Naming Committee, a committee that was driven by the desire to re-create the map of ancient Israel to support Jewish superior ownership claims (Benvenisti 2002, p.27).

This renaming project came into full force after the establishment of Israel in 1948 and the exodus of Palestinian refugees, which left a near blank canvas for the project to make changes accordingly. So for example places such as *Acca* became *Akko* and *Asqalan* became *Ashkelo*n (Ra'ad 2010, p.183). The power of this renaming is summed up by Benvenisiti:

> A name creates order in the world…Map drawing and naming of physical features is an act of possession, of creating a new reality…We can organize a new grid of reference and by that we believe that we have re-created the country and gained symbolic ownership (Benvenisti 1986, p.192).

This silencing of the Nakba contributed to its later politicization in the Palestinian collective consciousness within the 1948 Territory. Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury explain that a "process in which historical memories- those that were silenced but never forgotten, and certainly not erased- are transformed into political assets" (Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury 2017, p.395).

2.2 *The Palestinian citizens of Israel*

The military regime imposed upon the Palestinian community inside the 1948 Territory from 1948-1967 was incredibly oppressive and left many feeling too afraid to talk let alone write about what had happened to them. Their communal silence, in addition to the focus on Palestinians as a refugee population contributed to a historiographical gap on scholarship of the Palestinians inside the Israeli State for many decades. They were not free to write and study their own community, and in general the academy and global media were not interested in them. This period is particularly well documented by Shira Robinson in her book '*Citizen Strangers; Palestinians and the Birth of Israel's Liberal Settler State'* (2013). Robinson traces the draconian measures placed on this community's civil rights including movement and

employment restrictions. During this period many Arabs including the Palestinians in the diaspora, considered those that stayed to be traitors for accepting nominal Israeli citizenship. The poet Rashed Husayn describes his disappointment at his cold reception by Arab intellectuals at a conference in Belgrade in 1959:

> Who are we, the Arabs o Israel? Here they see us as a fifth column, there as traitors. We live in two worlds and belong to none. I did not expect them to embrace me but was unwilling to hear the same allegations I hear in Israel. Only in Belgrade did I fully comprehend the tragedy of the Palestinians in Israel. I decided we suffered he result of the Nakba even more than the refugees, In Belgrade I did not know who I was, a national Arab loyal to his people or a suspect Israel citizen (Pappe 2011, p.77).

Professional research on the Palestinians citizens of Israel did not really take off until the 1970s after the *Naksa* (the 1967 war that saw Israel conquer the West Bank and Gaza). Through the afore mentioned Institute for Palestine Studies, Fouzi el-Asmar published an autobiographical account in 1975 of what it is '*To be an Arab in Israel*'- indeed the title would be just that. His writing provides a more human dimension to the experience of Palestinians inside the Israeli State. In 1976, Jiryis, published '*The Arabs in Israel'* in English. In 1978, Nafez Nazzal produced one of the earliest and most extensive oral history works on Palestine and more specifically the Western Galilee; '*Palestinian Exodus from Galilee, 1948'*. All these works were part of a flurry of academic activity that was mostly emerging from Palestinians involved in the PLO. At the same time the Israeli academy was also producing literature on the Palestinians. Israeli society was euphoric after having won the war and with its new standing in the region as a significant power, the Israeli academy commenced on a mission to "modernize everything in sight" (Pappe 2011, p.277). This theory of modernization became a hegemonic ideology in Israel and it was through this prism

that that the Palestinians citizens were viewed. Jewish Israeli social scientists avoided in-depth analysis of the Palestinian citizens and those that did address them often drew orientalist conclusions such as the 'backwardness' of Arab society. Israeli sociologist Sammy Smooha was among the first of his peers to research the Palestinians in Israel. Smooha's research produced orientalist and essentialist notions about the Palestinians and their backward society that required de-Arabization if they were ever to indeed become modern (Smooha 1978). Smooha has since developed his analysis and criticized state policies towards the Palestinians, nonetheless he continues to argue that they are a passive and de-politicized community (Smooha 2017). Elia Zureik commented on this literature in Israel and its orientalist framework:

> (it)…explains the economic and political backwardness of the Arab sector in Israel by referring to the value system, religion and family structure of Arab society…(and) neglects the politico-economic circumstances in which the Palestinians find themselves as a minority in a settler society such as Israel *(*Zureik p.69).

Zureik highlights the essentialist nature of literature that dominated the Israeli academy at the time, which was committed to putting forward a positive external image of the new state. Even academics from outside of Israel were contributing to this picture of the Palestinian community inside Israel, most notable the American political scientist Ian Lustick. In his book '*Arabs in the Jewish State'*, he argued that co-option and coercion had rendered this community 'docile' (Lustick 1968). Zureik also points to the fact that this literature neglects entirely any engagement with colonial or settler colonial paradigms.

In addition to the early Palestinian scholarship of the 1970s, significant challenges to the general Zionist discourse on the land before 1948 and the events of the Nakba

came from Palestinian academics inside Israel including Mustafa Kabha, Mahmoud Yazbak and Adel Mana (2006, 1998, 2017). Indeed Mana's most recent book published in Arabic and Hebrew is on the Palestinian community that survived the ethnic cleansing and remained on the land in Haifa and the Galilee. This work relies on extensive oral history interviews with first generation Nakba survivors and their descendants. Mana covers a topic that is extremely under researched in the field. Indeed only a few years previously Ilan Pappe identified this as a heavily under researched area in his book '*The Forgotten Palestinians: A History of the Palestinians in Israel*' (2011). Pappe's contribution to the field of Palestine Studies began in the 1980s as part of what became known as the Israeli New Historians. Their work coincided with the de-classification of many of the Israeli archives and lead to the publishing of many works challenging the Zionist narrative. In 2006, Pappe published *'The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine'* which revealed a pre-meditated plan by the Zionist forces known as Plan D, to cleanse the land of Palestinian Arabs in 1948. This work and Mana's work provide an important historical background for the situation of the Palestinians in the Galilee. With regards to the more contemporary situation Ghazi Falah, Nadim Rouhana and Nur Masalha have illuminated much on how the Palestinian citizens contend with an Israeli Zionist State and how their identities are constructed in such a state. As a key method of control in settler colonial states, space has been the subject of a lot of works within this scholarship and particularly there has been significant work on urban space by Oren Yiftachel and Haim Yacoubi.

All of the literature reviewed thus far in this section on the Palestinian citizens of Israel has been produced mostly by male academics and for a long time lacked an analysis on the intersections of gender. However, in the last two decades there has been a significant amount of critical feminist scholarship within the field and importantly it has

been produced by Palestinian women. Notably Rhoda Kanaaneh and Isis Nusair's '*Displaced at Home: Ethnicity and Gender among Palestinians in Israel'* (2010) highlights the triple marginality of the female Palestinian citizens of Israel. This collection of work by a group of a new generation female scholars demonstrates that "the minds of Palestinians within the 1948 borders have not as Raja Shehadeh had presumed, been colonized" (Kanaaneh and Nusair 2010, p.x). Nadera Shalhoub Kevorkian has also written and published extensively on the Palestinian citizens of Israel, particularly focusing on women and the gender dynamics of occupation. As a legal anthropologist, she uses oral testimonies to demonstrate Israel's violent policies and how they affect everyday life (Shalhoub Kevorkian and Abdo 2006, Shalhoub Kevorkian 2011).

This recent critical scholarship has analyzed the Palestinians citizens of Israel as a collective with agency. By placing the focus on the Palestinians themselves and treating them as subjects rather than objects of the Zionist settler colonial project this scholarship has been an empowering tool. Indeed in the last two decades, the community has become more vocal and more daring in its challenge to the settler colonial norms imposed upon them, undoubtedly in part to this changing discourse.

3. Settler Colonialism and Indigeneity

3.1 *The Settler colonial paradigm*

In 1965 Fayez Sayegh published an important paper entitled '*Zionist colonialism in Palestine'*. In it he describes Israel as a "settler-state" and explains that its racist characteristic is not acquired but rather "inherent in the very ideology of Zionism" (Sayegh 1965, p.214). This early and seminal work on settler colonialism in Palestine was followed a few years later with George Jabbour's '*Settler Colonialism in Southern*

Africa and the Middle East' (1970), Maxime Rodinson's '*Israel: A Settler-Colonial State*' (1973) and Zureik's '*The Palestinians in Israel: A study of Internal Colonialism'* (1979). Zureik placed the Palestinians inside Israel at the center of his research. The analysis presented was that of an indigenous national group within a colonial regime. These later works linked Israel's policies with that of apartheid South Africa, contributing to the settler-colonial analysis that was only just beginning to emerge. Outside of the academy, and given the historical context of decolonization from metropolitan colonialism, the Palestinian national movement modelled its agenda, goals, and tactics primarily on the Algerian Front de Libération Nationale (FLN), which had victoriously struggled against French settler-colonialism. However this early analysis and application of the settler-colonial paradigm to Palestine and affiliation with decolonial struggles was put on hiatus for several decades. Particularly as the prevailing discourse was shaped by the Oslo Accords of the early 1990s, in which the two warring national movements would find peace within a two-state paradigm.

Settler colonial studies is barely two decades old and its birth as a discipline was marked by Patrick Wolfe's book *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology* (1999). Wolfe describes settler colonialism as "a structure, not an event" and its driving force or logic is the elimination of the native (Wolfe 2006, p.388). It's distinction from colonialism can be found in this logic of elimination. Lorenzo Veracini rather simply explains that in colonial domination the colonialists say to the native "you work for me" whereas with settler colonial structures, the settler says to the native "you go away" (Veracini 2011, p.1). The settler colonial project seeks to usurp the Indigenous society and it is here we can understand its relationship to land. Marcelo Svirsky explains this relationship as two-fold; "capture and exclusive appropriation" (Svirsky 2017, p.31).

This exclusive appropriation can also be described as an effort to 'indigenize' the settlers. In Palestine, this is done by simultaneously denying the Palestinian people's connection to the land whilst emphasizing the Zionist claim to an ancient past and continuous presence in the land. Veracini explains that this notion of settler fixity is used to paint a picture of indigenous people as "unsettled". This leads to a "typically settler colonial inversion, where Indigenous people are nomadified and settlers can express their nativism and perform a related process of indigenization" (Veracini 2008, p.4-5).

The early analysis on Zionism as a settler colonial project by various Palestinian scholars was not picked up upon by those working on Palestine in the academy until much more recently. In the first special issue on Palestine in the *Settler Colonial Studies Journal* in 2012, the editors asked some pertinent questions as to why this has been the case:

> Recent Palestinian political history has been a long march away from a liberation agenda and towards a piecemeal approach to the establishment of some kind of sovereignty under the structure of the Israeli settler colonial regime. In this environment, it is not surprising that even scholarship written in solidarity with Palestinians tends to shy away from structural questions. Much of the contemporary literature tends to take on micro-political issues or Israeli administrative practices within a given context and prodigiously overwork them. But when did Palestinians ever find themselves in a 'post-colonial' condition? When did the ongoing struggle over land and for return become a 'post conflict' situation? When did Israel become a 'post-Zionist' society? When did indigenous Palestinians in the Galilee (for example) become an 'ethnic minority'? And when did the establishment of the Palestinian

> Authority and the consequent fortification of Palestinian reserves become 'state-building'? (Salamanca, Qato, Robie and Samour 2012, p.3)

The editors of the special issue highlight the inadequacy of former paradigms to address the reality on the ground and the whole of Palestine beyond its physical territorial embodiments. Indeed much literature on the 'Israeli occupation' limits Palestine to the West Bank and Gaza. It fails to transcend the false geographical borders and social restrictions on what constitutes as Palestine and who counts as Palestinian.

The settler colonial paradigm explains the Zionist project in terms of incompleteness and ongoing dispossession of the Palestinian Indigenous people. For many Palestinians, this process has been known as *al-nakba al-mustamirra* (the ongoing Nakba) and manifests itself in a multitude of ways across historic Palestine including expulsion, killing and Judaisation of the landscape. Indeed the aim of settler colonial states is to eliminate the Indigenous people, either physically or by eliminating their Indigeneity. This can, of course, also take place in the epistemic realm and certainly knowledge production has been a key weapon in the attempted elimination of the Palestinian people. For the last ten years, the settler colonial paradigm has sat firmly on the agenda of Palestine Studies, with decolonisation replacing older paradigms of peace-making and conflict resolution.

Settler colonial studies has been an important analytical tool for "dehistoricising colonialism" and bringing it back in the picture for non-native/ non-Indigenous scholars (Macoun and Strakosch 2013, p.426). This re-emergence was not too dissimilar to the way that Israeli New Historians in the late 1980s brought the Nakba back in to the picture for non-Palestinian scholars. Indeed just as it became more and

more common place to read the phrase “ethnic cleansing” in scholarship on Palestine/Israel, so too are we seeing more usage of Wolfe’s explanation of a “structure not an event” to describe the Zionist invasion of Palestine. It is also largely perceived as an empowering tool for those in the academy who are politically motivated towards the Palestinian community and to decolonization. However, tensions have arisen between settler colonial studies and Indigenous studies, long regarded as ‘sister’ disciplines. These tensions are focused on the potential of settler colonial studies scholarship to reproduce colonizing epistemologies. Jodi Byrd explains this;

> One of the challenges facing indigenous studies in conversation with settler colonial studies and frontier histories is to resist the continual prioritizing of an effect for a cause, of requiring the settler and the frontier rather than the indigenous as the structuring analytic through which to assess the consequences of colonialism (Byrd 2014, p.153).

Byrd importantly asks how scholars can avoid falling into the trap of centering the narrative around the experience of the settler and replicating the silencing of Indigenous voices? In a recent article entitled ‘*Writing/ Righting Palestine studies: settler colonialism. Indigenous sovereignty and resisting the ghost(s) of history’*, Rana Barakat answers this concern by making an excellent case for the “use of settler colonialism as a useful method of analysis within the larger project of indigenous studies” (Barakat 2017, p.5). Barakat criticizes the focus on settler triumph and native defeat in settler colonial studies literature, arguing that it results in replicating a narrative that relegates indigenous people to objects of a past colonial invasion. Rouhana, drawing upon Mahmoud Mamdani (2015), replicates this narrative and argues that unlike North America where settler colonialism has triumphed, the Zionist

settler colonial project is ongoing and “its outcome is still undetermined” (Rouhana 2015, p.1). Rouhana goes on to describe the exceptionality of the Israeli settler colonial case ‘because its main goal is still actively challenged and resisted by a nation that Zionism has defeated but failed to reduce to the status of indigenous populations in “triumphed’ settler-colonial cases” (Rouhana 2015, p.2). This misrepresentation of the struggle of Indigenous people in North America as a defeated one situates the settler colonialism to an event and not a structure. Conversely, Barakat’s approach, “will offer us a way to read Palestinians as the makers of Palestinian history as opposed to Palestinians as a part of a Zionist narrative” (Barakat 2017, p.2).

3.2 *Indigenous Studies*

Barakat’s call to consider settler colonial studies as a tool within the toolbox of Indigenous Studies is appropriate within the project of decolonizing epistemologies in the academy. Indeed, this thesis hopes to contribute to this line of scholarship and academic practice, which has also been articulated by Anaheed Al Hardan in her work about Palestinian refugee communities:

> Rejecting colonizing epistemologies, and mitigating the coloniality of power/knowledge as it unfolds in the Palestinian refugee communities through the researcher’s and her research’s political commitment to Palestinian decolonization, is therefore a beginning, rather than an end, of the move toward decolonizing research on Palestinians’ (Al Hardan 2014, p.69).

Whilst the settler colonial paradigm has sat firmly on the agenda of Palestine Studies, there are significant apprehensions about locating scholarship on Palestine under the Indigenous Studies umbrella. Yet the use of the settler colonial paradigm necessitates

the use of Indigeneity and engagement with Indigenous Studies scholarship. Gerald Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel explain this oppositional and binary understanding of Indigeneity:

> Indigenousness is an identity constructed, shaped and lived in the politicised context of contemporary colonialism. The communities, clans, nations and tribes we call Indigenous peoples are just that: Indigenous to the lands they inhabit, in contrast to and in contention with the colonial societies and states that have spread out from Europe and other centres of empire. It is this oppositional, place-based existence, along with the consciousness of being in struggle against the dispossessing and demeaning fact of colonization by foreign peoples from other peoples of the world (Alfred and Corntassel 2005, p.597).

This oppositional understanding emphasizes that Indigenous people and settlers co-define each other. Where the latter experience is one of domination and expansion of the frontier, the former's experience is characterized initially by forced displacement and loss of sovereignty but also and more importantly resistance to the settler colonial structure. Alfred and Corntassel also explain indigenous identity as a place-based response to colonial invasion and settlement. This is also reiterated by Colin Samson and Carlos Gigoux who explain that indigeneity "goes beyond the attachment to the cultural attributes of a community and extends to the special relationship with the lands where those cultural attributes are formed" (Samson and Gigoux 2017, p.1). Indigenous Studies as a discipline focuses on this Indigenous identity and experience. As a cross-disciplinary field which has emerged internationally but perhaps most prominently in Australia, the US and Canada, Indigenous Studies engages in knowledge production on communities that recognize themselves as Indigenous. It is an academic space spanning across cultures,

languages and epistemologies. The emphasis within this field is also placed on indigenous ways of knowing/ understanding of indigenous experience, particularly resistance to invasion and continued attempts at erasure. Noelani Goodyear-Ka'opua further explains Indigenous scholarship as land-centered literacies, in other words knowledge that emanates from an intimate and ontological connection with the land (Goodyear- Ka'opua 2013). Of course this relationship need not be a physical connection, as the case for Indigenous peoples who have been forcibly displaced from their lands and homes.

In 1982, in an interview with Giles Deleuze, Elias Sanbar (founder of the Journal for Palestine Studies) stated the following assertion:

> We are also the American Indians of the Jewish settlers in Palestine. In their eyes our one and only role consisted in disappearing. In this it is certain that the history of the establishment of Israel reproduces the process which gave birth to the United States of America (Deleuze and Snabar 1982).

Sanbar's comparison with Native Americans was one that was not necessarily recognized at the time. Indeed scholarship defining the Palestinians as indigenous, until much more recently, has usually followed an autochthonous definition, referring to pre-existence rather than a politicised engagement with the Indigeneity paradigm. The surge in settler colonial scholarship led to a tentative adoption of the concept of 'Indigenous'. Indeed Masalha's edited book on the internally displaced Palestinians (2005) contains a section entitled *'Evolving Israeli Policies and Indigenous Resistance'* and focuses on the activities aimed at countering the state's discriminatory policies. Work by Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury (2015) and Ghanem and Mustafa (2014) have developed the Indigeneity paradigm further. The tentative approach of applying the theory of Indigeneity is perhaps best illuminated by Yasser

Arafat's famous statement, during his confinement on his compound in Ramallah; "we are not Red Indians". The reasoning behind Arafat's words and this more general characterisation of Indigeneity is the equation of 'Indigenous' with erasure and defeat.

Interestingly the Israeli academy and state has had fluctuating and mixed attitudes toward the denomination of a particular segment of the Palestinian population, the Naqab Bedouins, as Indigenous.[12] This selective use of the term 'Indigenous' for the Bedouins and not for other Palestinian communities serves as a tool to de-politicise them. They are portrayed as a docile, primitive and 'traditional' and a minority community rather than one that has sovereign land claims and restitution rights as Indigenous people. In enforcing their own definition and qualification of who is Indigenous, the Israeli State follows the pattern of other settler colonial regimes world-wide that also place limitations on indigeneity (Samson and Gigoux 2017, p.2-3). The case of the Naqab Bedouin and their relationship to Indigenous Studies is an interesting one. They have often been acknowledged by this scholarship as Indigenous whilst the rest of the Palestinian population have not, thus dividing the Nakba into unconnected experiences of displacement. Samson and Gigoux isolate the Bedouin from their Palestinian compatriots in their book '*Indigenous Peoples and Colonialism: Global Perspectives*'. Indeed they write that the plight of the Indigenous Naqab Bedouins began in 1948 when 80 per cent were expelled to neighbouring countries when their land was declared *terra nullius* (Samson and Gigoux 2017, p.144).

[12] For an overview on the development of the concept of Indigeneity for the Palestinian Bedouins in 48 Territory see Seth J. Frantzman, Havatzelet Yahel and Ruth Klark, "Contested Indigeneity: The Development of an Indigenous Discourse on the Bedouin of the Negev, Israel," *Israel Studies* 17, n. 1 (2012).

Contrary to this rather selective and in some cases, reductive use of Indigeneity, quite a few scholars, many of whom are Palestinian Bedouin themselves, have been engaging with the Indigeneity paradigm. This engagement goes beyond a categorical level and describes not only their relationship with the settler state, but also provides a lens from which to view their resistance to it. Ismael Abu Sa'ad was among one of the first Palestinian scholars to explore and locate the Naqab Bedouin within the Indigeneity paradigm. His work more recently has focused on Bedouin responses to urbanisation and forced sedentarisation as Indigenous resistance (2008). Similarly Mansour Nasasra has discussed the concept of *sumud* (steadfastness) as a form of Indigenous resistance to ongoing demolitions of villages and forced displacement by the Israeli State (2010). Whilst Sophie Ricter-Devroe, in the same theme as this research, has explored extensively oral history traditions among the women of the Naqab as a method of preserving Indigenous knowledge and countering settler-colonial epistemic erasures (2014-2016). This scholarship on the Naqab Bedouin is rich and provides an excellent academic stepping stone into more comparative works that engage with Indigenous people elsewhere.

Palestinian resistance to and mobilisation against the settler colonial regime draws many parallels with other Indigenous peoples across the world. Steven Salaita's work and particularly his book '*Inter/nationalism Decolonizing Native America and Palestine*' (2016), discusses these connections between Indigenous national liberation movements. Looking at the internationalizing of indigenous nationalist movements fighting against similar dominating powers, Salaita makes a strong case for not only situating Palestine within the field of Indigenous Studies but also advocating for stronger political alliances between Indigenous movements. Salaita's

work also illuminates how the concepts of indigeneity and nationalism overlap and are not mutually exclusive terms.

In addition to the afore mentioned connotations of fragility to indigeneity, some scholars are also apprehensive towards it relationship with nationalism and national resistance. Rouhana for example uses the concept of "Homeland Nationalism" to describe the struggle and resistance of the Palestinian citizens of Israel against the settler colonial structure (Rouhana 2015, p.1). Rouhana explains that for Palestinians, "Homeland Nationalism…is the process of reclaiming Palestine as their homeland" (Rouhana 2015, p.3) and is expressed through cultural and political spheres which culminates in the demand for decolonization (Rouhana 2015, p.4). Rouhana marries minority nationalism and indigenous rights to explain the increasing political assertion and resistance of the Palestinian community in the 1948 Territory. However he also adamantly emphasizes the difference between Palestinians and Indigenous Americans and is reluctance to engage with the Indigeneity paradigm. This comes from a desire to exceptionalise Palestinians from other Indigenous peoples under the premise that other settler colonial projects such as the US and Canada have "triumphed", whilst the Zionist project remains unfinished;

> Israel should not be placed in the category of triumphed settlers' projects because its main goal is still actively challenged and resisted by a nation that Zionism has defeated but failed to reduce to the status of indigenous populations in 'triumphed' settler-colonial cases… he ultimate outcome of the Zionist project remains undetermined is, therefore, closely related to the modern political homeland nationalism of the Palestinian people…(Rouhana 2015, p.1-2).

Although there are distinctions in the Palestinian experience of settler colonialism, exceptionalising it leads to the exceptionalisation of Israel as a settler colonial entity. This exceptionalism not only leads to limited scholarship but can also have serious political and material consequences where Palestinians are not included in global categories as oppressed, indigenous and subaltern peoples.

Amal Jamal on the other hand, whilst also combining the concepts of homeland nationalism and indigeneity, goes further and explains with specificity to the case of Palestinians in Israel that;

> They go beyond cultural rights and usually seek to revitalise historical, national and political rights, revolutionizing the political and cultural status quo and demanding a new political order that meets their expectations and future visions (Jamal 2011, p.2).

The understanding that the demands of these Palestinians undermines the foundational core of the Zionist settler state as an exclusive Jewish entity is both nationalist and indigenous is a more nuanced analysis than the one Rouhana offers. Indeed whilst Palestinians have long engaged with indigeneity and its autochthonous understanding as described earlier, a deeper engagement has been emerging both inside and outside of the academy. Jamal notes that the politicization of Indigeneity is becoming a central facet of political mobilisation:

> Indigeneity as a basic characteristic of the Arab-Palestinian community located in its historical framework is becoming a central political formula promoted by the political, civil and intellectual leadership of the community. Indigenous rights are being constructed as a central legitimizing principle in addition to citizenship, for Arab collective rights within the State of Israel (Jamal 2011, Politicising Arab indigeneity in Israel section, para 1).

The situating of this research within the indigenous framework is therefore both reflective of academic developments and political developments (as noted by Jamal and will be discussed later in the thesis) within civil society in Palestine. Indigeneity is not simply a tool for globalising Palestine, as Salaita argued, it also reflects accurately Palestinian response and resistance against settler colonial invasion.

4. Oral History and memory studies

4.1 *A history of oral history*

Writing on the philosophy of history in 1940, Walter Benjamin rhetorically asks "With whom does historicism actually sympathize? The answer is inevitable: with the victor" (Benjamin 2005, VII). With this Benjamin explains that history has been dominated by the narratives of the victors and the political elites who wield power. It is also used as a weapon in power struggles, to justify war, revolutions and in the case of Palestine/Israel the conquering and settlement of territory. The history of Palestine was long conceived through the Biblical narrative and even today much hegemonic knowledge on Palestine still derives from many of the stories in the Bible. This historical blueprint inspired much of the British imperial interventions and expeditions in Palestine through a desire to uncover the Holy Land. Indeed the Balfour Declaration (1917) came about at a time when many of the British political elite were Christian Zionists who supported the 'return' of world Jewry to Palestine. The Zionist movement also used the biblical narrative to provide a unifying collective history for Jews and to inspire their imaginings of return to Eretz Israel (Masalha 2007). British colonial and later Zionist settler-colonial narratives demonstrate well how often history can be molded to serve the purposes of land and power struggles.

Beshara Doumani also asks some pertinent questions about history in '*Rediscovering Ottoman Palestine: Writing Palestinians into History*'. He argues that Palestinian history "whole social groups and a wide range of fundamental issues remain obscured by dark shadows" (Doumani 1992, p.6). Doumani argues that a top down approach which had been successful in excluding the majority of the native population was adopted by Israeli, Arab and Western historians alike. Writing just towards the end of the First Intifada, Doumani calls for Palestinians to be written into history as a people with the agency "to precipitate changes of historic proportions" (Doumani 1992, p.6). Within this top-down history that Doumani describes, written documents are favoured as the more authoritative sources and in some cases claiming absolute truth. However, for the last fifty years, mostly through anthropological works, oral sources have been challenging this hierarchy of historical sources. Oral history as a discipline is a broad umbrella for the study of history through sources that are orally transmitted, including but not limited to; songs, folklore, memories, stories, poems etc. As a methodology, oral history focuses on the act of listening and gathering information from interviews and various interactions with the communities being studied. The focus in this thesis is on memories (both individual and collective) as a form of oral history and will be discussed in the following section.

In '*The Voice of the Past: Oral History'*, Paul Thompson writes that "oral history is a history built around people*"* (Thompson 2000, p.24). The discipline of history was long concerned with political narratives with history divided chronologically according to reigns and dynasties. Documentation of ordinary people prior to the latter half of the 21st century was limited to registers of births, deaths and marriages, in other words empirical and legal statistics. Other documents such as diaries and letters were few, undoubtedly because many did not survive the test of time (Thompson 2000, p.4). In

1945, American folklorist Benjamin Botkin published the personal narratives and memories of former slaves in the book '*Lay my burden down: A folk history of slavery'*. In the introduction he writes:

> From the memories and lips of former slaves have come the answers which only they can give to questions which Americans still ask: What does it mean to be a slave? What does it mean to be free? And, even more, how does it feel? (Botkin 1944, p.ix)

Botkin here captures the power of memories and narratives to tell us beyond the when and where, to the why and how. They tell us not just about historical events but also peoples current relations to them.

In a seminal article published in 1977, feminist oral historian Sherna Gluck, claimed that "women are creating a new history (and) affirming that our everyday lives are history" (Gluck 1977, p.3). This every day is what oral history is able to capture and its general adherence to a bottom-up approach, allows for historical accounts to be more textured, detailed and 'human'. Oral history relies on people's perceptions of the past and the way in which they choose to remember past events, in this way "oral history has radical implication for the social message of history as a whole" (Thompson 2000, p.7). Through challenging the established account, oral history is able to contribute to the notion that history is neither fixed nor absolute.

However oral history is also charged with being less reliable because of inconsistencies, contradictions or lack a chronological order. Whilst these notions might hold some truths, they do not render oral history insignificant or less valuable than other disciplines. One of the most seminal works on oral history was written in 1991 by Alessandro Portelli and deals with many of the criticisms levelled at the field. In '*The Death of Luigi Trastulli and other stories: Form and meaning in Oral History'*

(1991), Portelli discusses the death of Luigi Trastulli, a 21-year-old Italian steel worker who died in a clash with police at a rally in the town of Terni against the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949 (Portelli 1991, p.1). This town, located in the Umbria region of Italy, was long a symbol of the working class and the site of many struggles against fascism, is also Portelli's home town. In his introduction to the book, he admits that his own motivation for doing oral history was as much scholarly as it was political (Portelli 1991, p.xi).

Those engaged in oral history works often openly state their political motivations for revealing or elevating voices that have been silenced. Although this is not unproblematic in itself, for example when anthropologists seek to 'be a voice for the voiceless' they can contribute to the silencing of the very voices they wish to elevate. Oral history fieldwork has led to a significant exploration of self-awareness and reflexivity in the contemporary anthropology field, for example in '*Writing Culture'* by James Clifford and George Marcus and amongst feminist anthropologists such as Lila Abu Lughod. If we return to Terni, Portelli uses his home town to demonstrate that the oft cited limitations of oral history are actually strengths. He writes that the "errors, inventions, and myths lead us through and beyond facts to their meanings" (Portelli 1991, p.2). Co-workers, witnesses and press all had different accounts of how Trastuilli, the steel worker, died. Portelli shows that various memories of the same event show us how different people make sense of a significant event. He also explains that Trastulli's death laid the ground for collective memories, tales, legends and myths that all exerted a significant influence on Terni's identity and culture. Through this case study, Portelli challenges the essentialized assumptions on oral history and the notion of an absolute historical truth. He also champions oral history for its continuous productive nature:

> Memory is not a passive depository of facts, but an active process of creation of meanings. Thus, the specific utility of oral sources for the historian lies, not so much in their ability to preserve the past, as in the very changes wrought by memory. These changes reveal the narrators' effort to make sense of the past and to give a form to their lives, and set the interview and the narrative in their historical context (Portelli 1991, p.52).

In settler societies, oral histories have been gathered to support land claims, and it is here too that they have faced criticism and had doubt shed other their credibility. Writing about the Waitangi Tribunal of 1975 in New Zealand, Miranda Johnson explains that these criticisms have serious political and legal motivations that seek to undermine Indigenous land claims (Johnson 2005). Johnson also critiques those that claim oral history 'fills in the gaps' and acts as a supplement to the historical hegemonic record. Writing about settler colonial cases she argues that this notion serves non-Indigenous 'multiculturalists' who seek to enrich the historical narrative for their purposes (Johnson 2005, p.262). Johnson also makes an important contribution to the link between oral history and time. History is a way of measuring and making sense of time, and the sequential plotting of history is the ultimate product of modernity (Schwarz 2010, p.43). Oral history on the other hand often does not adhere to chronological order. Writing in 1985 on Central African oral traditions, Jan Vansina argued that the "lack of reliable chronology" was these oral histories "most severe limitations". Whereas in contrast, he argued, for Europeans "time legitimizes and creates importance…" (Vansina 1985, p.177-185). The third chapter of this thesis will deal with memories and temporality in further detail, but it is perhaps important to mention that prevailing understandings of time and how to order time was also used as a weapon of domination by colonial powers. Vansina's Eurocentric and rigid

notions of temporality are clearly outdated, indeed temporal boundaries and distinctions between the past and present have weakened recently due to memory and its manifestations in modern media such as film, theatre and art. Andreas Huyssen comments that this memory scholarship drive has had an effect on how we see time:

> In certain ways, then, our contemporary obsessions with memory in the present may well be an indication that our ways of thinking and living temporality itself are undergoing a significant shift (Huyssen 2003, p.4).

4.2 *Memories and narratives*

Memories are but one form of oral history and consist of our recollections of the past that rely just as much on remembering as forgetting. These memories are constantly changing as our experience of the present very largely depends on our memory of the past. Memory scholar Paul Connerton explains that the past provides a context of objects and events with which we can make present day connections and references to and at the same time we remember the past according to what is happening to us in present day (Connerton 1989, p.2). Memories are therefore not stagnant stores of information but rather ever changing, forming personal and collective narratives. Memory can thus never be an exact reproduction of an event or experience, indeed nothing can reproduce the past as it happened. Pierre Nora is perhaps the most well-known historian of memory in the West and his seven volumes that make up '*Les Lieux de Mémoire'* (1984-1992) is one of the most prominent works on modern memory. These volumes look at the making of France as a nation through the lens of memory. Nora explains memory as a "perpetually actual phenomenon, a

band tying us together to the eternal present: history is a representation of the past" (Nora 1989, p.8).

While Nora makes a distinction between history and memory, Nadim Rouhana and Areej Sabbagh-Khoury argue that in the case of dominated groups (such as the Palestinians) this distinction is not necessarily the case (Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury 2017, p.396). Histories and collective memories which are denied or suppressed intertwine organically as they fill in each other's gaps. Both collective and personal memories, histories and stories are woven together to create a sense of who we are as individuals and as groups. Maurice Halbwach claims that memory is determined by an already established identity. Halbwach's important works '*Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire'* (1925) and '*La mémoire collective'* (1950) explain that memory is socially constructed and that being a member of a social group enable individuals to acquire and 'recall' memories. It is this Halbwachian understanding of memory that helps us understand the interaction between personal memories and national narratives. As the peculiarities of social group change and develop, so too do individuals memories. Nora draws upon Halbwach's theory of collective memory describing it as "collective, plural and yet individual" (Nora 1989, p.9). Jan Assmann divides collective memory into two; cultural memory and communicative memory. Cultural memory refers to "all knowledge that directs behaviour and experience in…a society". This is sustained by the generations through repeated social practice. In comparison communicative memory is based upon memories of everyday communication (Assmann 1995, p.127).

Much of the work on memory in the last half a century came from scholars working within Holocaust Studies. Karien Goertz argues this interest was sparked by a wish to keep the Holocaust from "receding into the cold storage of history" (Goertz 1998,

p.33). This scholarship linked memory and collective trauma and also saw the coining of the term “post-memory” by Marianne Hirsh (2008). Writing extensively on memory transfer across generations among Holocaust survivors, she notes that the everyday reality is overshadowed by the inherited memory of a more significant past. Hirsh defines post-memory as the “relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before” (Hirsh 2008, p.106). Rather than being lived, these experiences are “remembered’ through stories and images which they grew up with. Hirsch writes that these transmissions are so emotive and effective that they can “seem to constitute memories in their own right” (Hirsch 2008, p.107). Writing in the context of a massive social trauma, the Holocaust, Hirsch identifies a ‘passing on’ of trauma across generations.

Drawing on Sigmund Freud, Cathy Caruth examines the effect of trauma on narratives and memory in her book ‘*Unclaimed Experience*’ (1996). Noting that Freud explained how catastrophic events repeat themselves through the people who have experienced them, Caruth concludes that both the event and the ongoing experience of surviving is the trauma (Caruth 1996, p.1). The importance of memory with these collective traumas is explained by Paolo Jedlowski who writes that:

> Memory is not only what serves the identity of a group and its present interests, but also the depository of traces that may be valid both in defetishizing the existing and in understanding the processes that have led to the present as it is now, and to the criticism of this very present in the name of forgotten desires, aspirations or traumas (Jedlowski 2001, p.36).

However personal and human trauma can often be marginalized in the process of national narrative production. Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury explain that in the

Palestinian struggle for self-determination the emphasis was “on the political and national dimensions of their experience” whilst the more human experiences of “uprooting and exile, national dismemberment, massive incarcerations, massacres…were marginalized” (Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury 2017, p.399). Certain memories are favoured over others, and some things are forgotten entirely. In this way, amnesia as well as remembering forms and constitutive part pf collective memory.

Hirsch who clarifies that post-memory it is not a false memory and it does not make claims to be an actual memory of a lived experience. Rather it is a ‘memory’ received and developed in a certain cultural climate. The effects of trauma and an over-arching feeling of loss and sadness are also transferred:

> (it is) a structure of inter and trans generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience. It is a consequence of traumatic recall but (unlike post-traumatic stress disorder) at a generational remove (Hirsch 2008, p.).

This thesis thus builds on this work of oral history and post memory scholarship which seeks to bring forth a more politically engaging and motivated history. Thompson sums it up well when he explains the potential or oral history to break barriers and to place the people’s stories and narratives who we, as scholars, write about at the center:

> Oral history… can break down barriers between teachers and students, between generations, between educational institutions and the world outside; and in the writing of history- whether in books or museums or radio and film- it can give back to the people who made and experienced history, through their own words, a central place (Thompson 2000, p.3).

4.3 *Emergency Science*

In a tribute to Edward Said, Pappe recalls a meeting of historians in which Said explained the importance of Palestinian oral history in reconstructing a full picture of Palestinian history and more specifically the Nakba:

> Moderating a meeting between Israeli and Palestinian historians in Paris in 1998, Said explained in few sentences, and in a very patient voice, to the attentive public at large, and to the less attentive Israeli historians in particular, what a "historical document" was. The Israeli historians expressed their almost religious belief that they were both ideologically and empirically just and declared that the only reliable sources for the reconstruction of the 1948 war were in the IDF archives and its documents. Said clarified that a report by a soldier from 1948 is as much an interpretation, and quite often manipulation, of the reality as is any other human recollection of the same event; it was never the reality itself. By this, he pointed us to the vitality and significance of oral history in the reconstruction of the past. The most horrific aspects of the *Nakba*—the dozens of massacres that accompanied the ethnic cleansing—as well as a detailed description of what expulsion had been from the expelled's point of view, can only be built when such a historiographical position is adopted (Pappe 2003, p.9).

The attitude of the Israeli historians was one that was mirrored world over and had serious implications for the history and historiography of Palestine. For Palestinians, oral history was mobilised following the 1948 Nakba as a defence against total erasure and elimination. Nur Masalha's well known description of oral history as an "emergency science", explains how oral history was used to substitute much of the material forms of knowledge which were destroyed and stolen during the war (Masalha 2008, p.136). This "emergency science" thus developed as a bottom-up body of knowledge which would serve as a counter hegemonic narrative to the events

of 1948. Especially, as Masalha notes, that in "the context of rural and peasant Palestinian society" with a low print literacy rate, "oral history is a particularly useful methodology" (Maslaha 2005, p.5). The sharing of stories and traumatic anecdotes from the Nakba took place initially and tentatively on a familial and inter-generational level. Later these stories would filter out and enter into more public arenas, adding to the collective Nakba narrative. Now, Palestinian oral history has been taken up as an area of study by historians and anthropologists alike particular by those wanting to counter the Zionist narrative. On hegemonic historical discourse, Siegfried Kracauer writes that "there are always holes in the wall for us to evade and the improbable to slip in" (Kracauer 1995, p.8). These holes in the historical narrative of Palestine and Israel allowed for a counter story to emerge.

Much of Palestinian oral history is characterized by displacement, forced expulsion, social upheaval and a territorial absence. These themes are explored in a recent contribution to Palestinian oral history and memory by Ahmad Sa'di and Lila Abu Lughod's '*Nakba*, *Palestine, 1948 and the Claims of Memory'.* Through a series of essays, Sa'di and Abu-Lughod have compiled a comprehensive analysis of Palestinian Nakba memory. Following the main thesis of memory scholars, they focus on the contribution that these memories make to the present rather than what they tell us about the past. Palestinian Nakba experience is varied and differs from generation to generation. From the Palestinian who writes about returning after many years of exile to see their house occupied by Jews, to the Palestinian refugee who writes about nostalgia for a land lost. Sa'di and Abu-Lughod demonstrate through the production of one book that all these experiences combine to create the Palestinian experience. A similar publication by Dina Matar, '*What it means to be Palestinian: Stories of Palestinian Peoplehood'* (2010), is an ethnographic compilation of varying

experiences from people across Palestinian society. Rather than subvert the previous top-down approaches to Palestinian history, Matar's work seeks to compliment it and provides us with an example of how archival history and oral history can be used in coordination with each other. Susan Slyomovics also demonstrates how oral history can be used with other sources, in particular on tangible objects such as maps, photographs and memorial books, to illustrate the connection between memory and place in her book '*The Object of Memory: Arab and Jew narrate the Palestinian village'.* Slyomovics discussion of memory and landscape is grounded in Halbwachs theory on collective memory that individual memory is conditioned by being a member of a group. She uses the interesting example of Palestinian memorial books as manifestations of symbolic topology.

These scholars successfully recognize the empowering methods in oral history and utilize them in a bottom approach to Palestinian history, resulting in a narrative that is rich with human detail and a methodology that is now much more than an emergency science. It is clear that oral history can provide an alternative narrative of the past which can undermine and disrupt the settler colonial framework for understanding history. In its refusal to conform and challenge the Zionist narrative, Palestinian memory can be used, in Foucault's terminology, as a "counter memory" (1977). It is here we also discover its resistive properties, and as part of the larger project in which to counter settler colonial attempts at epistemic erasure.

4.4 *Stories of exile*

Palestinian oral history research began to pick up speed in the late 1970s and 1980s with a focus on refugee experiences. The first professional oral history work on the Palestinian refugees was conducted by the afore mentioned Nazzal who gathered

over one hundred interviews in Lebanon for his work on the exodus from the Galilee (Nazzal 1978). In personal correspondence with fellow oral historian Rosemary Sayigh, he explains his motivation for this work:

> Every refugee has a story which they carry with them. Every refugee story is a tragedy of homes and lives left behind… I wanted to focus on the reasons that these people became refugees as well as to elucidate their pain and suffering when they were not allowed to return to their homes … I felt that the refugees themselves by providing a first-hand account and personal impressions of events and personalities could provide …a documented historical record to better understand the Palestinian/Israeli conflict and the refugee question …I wanted to document this history for future generations. The narrative of refugee experience …could also serve as a bridge between those who left and those who stayed behind (Sayigh 2014, p.195).

Nazzal's final comments about this narrative of exile serving as a bridge between those who were expelled and those who were not is an important one for a fragmented and partially de-territorialized people.

As a result of the PLO operating out of the south, Lebanon became a hub for Palestinian cultural and historical projects. In addition to the official institutions, independent scholars were also conducting their own research in the refugee camps. Sayigh herself was also among the first who conducted extensive ethnographic research in the camps. Her first book '*Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries'* (1979) weaves a textured narrative of the Palestinian experience in Lebanon. Sayigh admits at the time that she did not theorise her work as she was doing it:

> In my approach to oral history I was simply doing it, using large chunks of what people told me. I didn't have any idea of what oral history was or about its potential for liberation struggles (Masalha 2012, p.216).

Later during her doctoral research on stories of women in the Shatila camp, Sayigh admitted to engaging more theoretically with "empowering methods in oral history" (Masalha 2012, p.216). Diana Allan and Rochelle Davis are also among the scholars whose later work on Palestine refugees has been an invaluable contribution to the body of literature on Palestinian oral history and memory.[13] In addition to the stories and narratives of the oft marginalized refugees, oral history is an empowering tool for illuminating women's experiences which are usually excluded from historical narratives (Gluck and Patai 1991). In her examination of Palestinian identity and history within the state of Israel, Nusair conducted dozens of interviews with women across three generations in the Galilee and the Traingle. She writes that "generational units in this context bring themselves into being through an active identification with particular shared historical events whereby each generation bears the imprint of these events" (Nusair 2010, p.76). Using these oral histories she sheds light on the gendered nature of violence against women within the state of Israel and in particular the horrors that befell them during the war. In particular she notes that many of them were affected by the infamous massacre that took place in Deir Yassin and many indirectly spoke about rape and the cutting open of pregnant bellies at the hands of the Zionist forces (Nusair 2010, p.83). Isabelle Humphries and Laleh Khalili also write about women's memories of the Nakba in 'Gender of Nakba Memory', noting that many of them were neglected and even silenced (2007). More recent writings on

[13] See in particular Allan, D. (2013). Refugees of the Revolution: Experiences of Palestinian Exile and Davis, R., (2011), Palestinian village Histories: Geographies of the Displaced.

Bedouin women in the Naqab, following in the footsteps of Abu Lughod's '*Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories*' (1993), have shown how they are resisting settler colonial manifestations through their oral traditions.[14] This scholarship that links oral history and resistance to settler colonialism set an important foundation for this thesis[15].

4.5 *Institutionalizing memories*

Following the PLO's expulsion from Lebanon following the 1982 invasion, oral history accelerated in the West Bank and Gaza and projects were conducted and institutionalised by various NGOs and academic institutions. Birzeit University for example was the first to teach a course in oral history in 1983. Later in 1985, the university Centre for Documentation and Research established its 'Destroyed Village' monograph series. This would serve as a foundational database and was the beginning of various informal village descendent networks across the Green Line and in exile (Sayigh 2014, p.198). Similarly, the Islamic University in Gaza established an oral history center in 1998 which now claims to have conducted and archived over 1500 oral testimonies on the Nakba and also more generally on Palestinian cultural identity (Catron 2013). The most recent university project, and the most impressive, is the American University of Beirut oral history archive with 'more than 1,000 hours

14 See Richter-Devroe, S., (2016), Oral Traditions of the Naqab Bedouin Women: Challenging Settler Colonial Representations through embodied performance and Abu-Rabia, S., (2008), Between memory and resistance, an identity shaped by space: The case of the Naqab Arab Bedouins.

15 Of note are two more works, one of which was discovered shortly prior to submission of this thesis; Gutman, Y., (2017) Memory Activism: Reimagining the Past for the Future in Israel-Palestine and an upcoming book; Abdo, N., and Masalha, N,. eds. (2018), An Oral History of the Palestinian Nakba. These will engaged with in the future development of this thesis.

of memories and testimonies with first generation Palestinians and other Palestinian communities in Lebanon' (AUB 2017). Many of the testimonies were gathered by the Nakba Archive, a project established by Diana Allan in 2002. On a visit to the archive in May 2016, the archivists explained to me how they have digitized, indexed and catalogued the memories, creating an impressive database in which (once made public) users will be able to search for interviews based on key words and themes.

Although this thesis does not deal with oral history archives, it is nonetheless important to mention the institutional oral history work that has been carried out in both the academy and in civil society that has preserved memories of Palestine prior to its 1948 invasion. Criticisms of this type of archiving can also be applied to other methods on institutionalizing memory. Indeed scholarly criticism of this issue has been concerned with the increasing institutionalization of memory, particularly within the nationalist discourse. Allan poses some important questions in this regard:

> Does this kind of quasi-institutionalized coercion of memory, in searching for certain kinds of truths, effect a structural forgetting of others? In approaching eyewitnesses as living links with Palestine and their narratives as tools for regenerating collective meanings within a political field, are we in a sense preventing them from mourning their losses in more personal or permanent terms? Do institutionalized commemorative practices, or academic studies that compulsively look back to this event as the core of national identity, make it harder for subsequent generations of refugees to articulate a sense of identity and belonging in terms of present realities and their hopes for the future? (Allan 200, p.257)

Indeed, the elevation of certain memories and testimonies can lead to the silencing of others. Whilst the cooption of personal narratives for a national collective narrative can also have a silencing affect. Ted Swedenburg's inquiry into memories from

veterans of the 1936-1939 Palestinian revolt against the British explores these complications of individual and collective memories. He also examines their cooption into the Palestinians national struggle, an inevitable part of any national historical consciousness (Swedenburg 1995).

Technological advances have also accelerated smaller NGO oral history projects which do not have the benefit of institutional funding. The pioneering (if a bit outdated) 'Palestine Remembered' website was established in 2000. The website's stated aim is "to create an easy medium where refugees can communicate, organize, and share their experiences amongst themselves". The refugees are encouraged to attach their stories, memories, pictures, movies, music files, join discussions at the message board and guest book sections. The website explicitly engages with refugee communities and encourages them to send in their narratives and stories to be shared through a global platform. Another NGO that deals with memory of the Nakba is the Israeli '*Zochrot*' (remembering in Hebrew) which has been working since 2002 to 'promote acknowledgement and accountability for the ongoing injustices of the Nakba, the Palestinian catastrophe of 1948 and the reconceptualization of the Return as the imperative redress of the Nakba and a chance for a better life for all the country's inhabitants' (Zochrot 2017). Zochrot are very active in collecting testimonies from 1948, from both Palestinians and Israelis involved in the ethnic cleansing. They sponsor and co-partner with many of the Palestinian NGO projects involved in oral history and memory work. Their most impressive project was the creation of the *inakba* application. This mobile phone application provides an interactive map that includes the Palestinian villages destroyed in 1948. Similar to Google Maps, it identifies the user's location using GPS and shows all the destroyed villages in the

surrounding area. It also allows people to upload photos and videos which has resulted in users uploading memories and testimonies of the villages.

During my fieldwork, this application was particularly useful in identifying various ruined villages that I was not aware of. Across historic Palestine there are often tell-tale signs of where a village once lay; the mason cut stones or a lone domed structure of a mosque. The sign we are most accustomed to look out for, having been told this from childhood, are the cactus rows which were often used by villages a natural wall of defence. Being able to name a village, by opening up *inakba*, at the site of a cactus row and watch uploaded testimonies was incredibly poignant and in a small way brought Palestine's lost landscape back to the present.

5. Resistance and Decoloniality

In this thesis, I am bridging together the literature outlined above on memory and Indigenous studies to the case studies of Haifa and the Galilee. I conceptualize Palestinian oral history as a form of Indigenous resistance in order to frame my work for several reasons. Firstly, this work takes direction from Alissa Macoun and Elizabeth Strakosch's (and many others) call for destabilization within knowledge production circles. In their critique of settler colonial studies, they argue that it remains a "largely White attempt to think through contemporary colonial relationships" (Macoun and Strakosch 2013, p.426). They suggest a reframing of our discourse in which the settler colonial project is revealed as "unable to be completed in the face of Indigenous resistance'. This reframing 'has the potential to be a profoundly and destabilizing move' they argue (Macoun and Strakosch 2013, p.432). Marcelo Svirsky similarly argues that within the settler colonial paradigm we have to "take seriously

phenomena of struggle, resistance and confrontation" because the incompleteness of the settler colonial project cannot solely be explained "in terms of the oppressor's self-error or strategic deferment" (Svirsky 2016, p.24). Rather, the continuing nature of settler colonialism is a fact because there is a continuing structure of resistance to elimination. Otherwise elimination would be accomplished and the settler colonial project would extinguish itself. Thus the situation of this research within the conceptual framework of Indigenous resistance is in itself an attempt to counter the designation of Palestinians as simply objects of settler colonial domination.

Secondly, throughout the fieldwork and the research in general I found that Indigenous resistance was more inclusive of activities and projects that did not fit entirely within the 'cultural resistance' framework. Leanne Simpson critiques Western centered social movement and resistance theory for not engaging with indigenous struggles and their histories (2011, p.16-17). Thus whilst not rejecting Gramscian (among others) notions of cultural resistance against hegemony, conceptualising Indigenous resistance acknowledges with specificity the context of indigenous struggle. Thirdly, Indigenous resistance the anti-colonial/ decolonial nature of these activities. In writing about the consistent production of opposition to coloniality, Nelson Maldonado-Torres describes the essence of decoloniality beautifully;

> decoloniality refers to efforts at rehumanizing the world, to breaking hierarchies of difference that dehumanize subjects and communities and that destroy nature, and to the production of counter-discourses, counter-knowledges, counter-creative acts, and counter-practices that seek to dismantle coloniality and to open up multiple other forms of being in the world (Maldonado-Torres 2016, p.10).

Decoloniality is therefore the strategy or logic created by the process of decolonization which seeks to rupture the colonial present. Included in this description of decolonity are efforts to produce “counter discourses”, “counter knowledges” and “counter practices”. Palestinian memory, as a form of indigenous knowledge, incorporates these efforts by challenging and countering Zionist discourses and erasure policies.

Therefore this research understands Indigenous resistance as resistance that challenges the settler state’s discourse, policies and normalcy and is decolonial in essence. Just as the settler colonial structure is ongoing so too is the resistance to it (Svirsky 2016). Here the work of James C. Scott in ‘*Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of resistance*’ (1985) is useful as he explains and describes continuous resistance rather than one off rebellions/ revolutions. Scott explains the subtlety of this resistance:

> Most of the political life of subordinate groups is to be found neither in the overt collective defiance of powerholders, nor in complete hegemonic compliance, but in the vast territory between these polar opposites (Scott 1985, p.136).

Sitting between structure and agency, this everyday resistance Scott describes can be very powerful. Although this research looks at both everyday resistance and more organized forms of resistance which utilize oral history, the less overt resistive manifestations cannot be overlooked. This includes the practice of oral history and the sharing of memories and narratives. For Aman Sium and Eric Ritskes, “stories are decolonization theory in its most natural form” (Sium and Ritskes 2013, p.ii). Beyond Palestine, Indigenous people across the world have been preserving their

narratives against colonial erasure through oral transmission. Describing storytelling as an act of living resistance, Sium and Ritskes explain further:

> Stories become mediums for Indigenous peoples to both analogize colonial violence and resist it in real ways. A kind of embodied reciprocity exists between a people and their stories…Contrary to liberal notions of stories as depoliticized acts of sharing, we must recognize stories as acts of creative rebellion. Decolonizing the very act of storytelling (Sium and Ritskes 2013, p.V).

Sium and Ritskes explain that the very simple act of sharing stories can be a real way to resist against colonial structures and contribute to decolonization. Stories and memories can challenge the hegemonic narrative and contribute to the decolonization of knowledge which is paramount to overall structure of decolonization. Marisa Elena Duarte and Miranda Belarde-Lewis have suggested that the decolonization of knowledge production means "stepping back from normative expectations" which include the assumptions that "all knowledge in the world can be represented in document form, to some degree, already is, and (that) Indigenous ways of knowing belong in state-funded university and government library, archive and museum" (Duarte and Belarde-Lewis 2015, p.678). Rejecting this notion that all knowledge (or at least worthy knowledge) must be in written form, many decolonial and Indigenous scholars highlight that oral history does not limit us to knowledge of the past, but also acknowledges the importance in the way that people choose to remember past events. In this way, memories as a form of oral history, can thus tell us just as much about present realities and imagined decolonised futures.

Indeed, by not limiting us to the past, memories help us to capture the continuous nature of settler colonial projects, such as the one in Palestine. Furthermore, as ever changing, this fluid body of memories, stories and testimonies allows us to redraw the

boundaries of history and challenge normative and universal assumptions about time and space. In this way, memories are not only a useful tool in the decolonization of knowledge, it can also be used as a tool for decolonial practices on the land.

Reflecting on the Idle No More Movement, Glen Coulthard's ends his seminal book '*Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*' with a transformative "five theses on indigenous resurgence and decolonization" (Coulthard 2014, p.437). Drawing upon Taiaiake Alfred and Leanne Simpson to conceptualise Indigenous resurgence, Coulthard points to ways in which Indigenous people can imagine a future free of colonial economic, political, cultural and social domination. Within this conclusion, Coulthard emphasizes the necessity of direct action as affirmative act in response to settler colonial practices of land appropriation or resource theft. As well as making a strong statement of existence, it disrupts the 'business as usual' flow of the state. This disruptive character of decolonisation was highlighted by Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang who wrote that "decolonization is not a metaphor". They warn that amidst a 'decolonize' fever, which has seen the word 'decolonization' thrown about rather loosely by various social justice groups, it has lost its true meaning. They explain that "decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life" and is inherently messy and uncomfortable (Tuck and Yang 2012, p.1). Thus, Indigenous direct action that disrupts the natural settler narrative or life rhythm is an essential part of decolonisation. Coulthard also addresses the disruption of capitalist structures as a way to assume Indigenous economic sovereignty and to counter the destructive effects of capital on Indigenous life. Coulthard also looks at "dispossession and Indigenous sovereignty in the city" (Coulthard 2014, p.480). Indigenous people are often relegated to only rural spheres and in this way are imagined as primitive and less 'civilised' (to be discussed further

in chapter four). Coulthard explains that many Indigenous people living in the urban centres in Canada as a result of land dispossession have had to develop their identities away from their homelands. Reconciling these groups and forging stronger solidarity between those on the land and those off the land are also an essential part of decolonisation. In the context of Palestine where the majority of Palestinians do not live within the borders of historic Palestine, this is incredibly apt.

Importantly to the discussion on decolonization is the understanding that it is not a return to a pre-colonial reality. Indigenous societies have been forever changed from colonial invasions and such a return is not possible. What is possible is for Indigenous people to dictate and frame their futures and make their own claims to what a post-colonial/ post-modern world would look like for them. Vitally though, decolonization is a process and one that was explained so articulately by Fanon:

> Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a program of complete disorder. But it cannot come as a result of magical practices, nor of a natural shock, nor of a friendly understanding. Decolonization, as we know, is a historical process: that is to say it cannot be understood, it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which give it historical form and content (Fanon 1963, p. 36).

Within this understanding of Palestinian memory as indigenous knowledge, this thesis will look at how memory practices are being mobilized in the Galilee as part of the decolonial struggle. Importantly, it identifies memory as a site of resistant indigeneity that has the power to contribute to a decolonial future.

6 .Conclusion

In this chapter I have situated my research within the literature on Palestinian citizens of Israel, oral history and Indigenous Studies. My fieldwork demonstrated clearly that oral history is being used as a mechanism to resist erasure both in the epistemic realm and on the land. This shall be presented in the following four chapters using data collected from my time spent in the Galilee and Haifa. What was illuminated by this research in particular was the potentiality of oral history to resist certain structures of power. Elias Khoury's fear of a history with one version, described at the opening of this chapter, is found in the experience of many Indigenous, subaltern and colonized people who have had their narratives ignored and suppressed. Oral history is not the only way to challenge the established account, but certainly in the case of Palestine it has been an efficacious mechanism in reviving a narrative that has faced constant suppression over many decades. Moreover, oral history and specifically memories are playing a central role in creating an increasing assertiveness amongst the Palestinian community inside the 1948 Territory.

This thesis also crucially argues that this assertiveness should be understood as Indigenous resistance, which in essence is resistance against erasure and continuous attempts at elimination. Indeed, in the last decade, the field of Palestine Studies has adopted the settler colonial paradigm as tool to analyze the State of Israel. This has necessitated engagement with the concept of Indigeneity and a discussion on including Palestine within the field of Indigenous Studies. This thesis also seeks to contribute to this discussion and argues that viewing Palestinian oral history practices as a form of Indigenous resistance, is both important and advantageous as it identifies their struggle as one against settler colonialism. Furthermore, it elevates them to more than simply objects of a settler colonial structure but also agents and subjects of their own narrative.

In the case of the 1948 community, Indigenous resistance enables us to understand the importance of their physical presence on the land to their oral history practices. Their memories are informed by the space around them and the changing landscape which is not only being de-Arabized but also aggressively Judaized. As living conduits to indigeneity, they have retained a physical connection where other Palestinians have been prevented from doing so. Importantly their survival of the 1948 Nakba and their subsequent resolve to remain on the land is a reminder to the settler colonial regime that its project has not succeeded.

Chapter 3

Temporality and transmission of Palestinian oral history

1. Introduction

Western temporal culture and the prevailing understanding of time came to dominate the world through European colonialism. Time was used a mechanism of control and to facilitate a more effective flow of goods, people and ideas to the European metropoles. Today's understanding of time was created in the 19th century after the Industrial Revolution which demanded a set 'working day' (Ogle 2015, p.50-51). This 'universal' understanding of time was thus established by European imperialism to preserve order not only in the colonies, but also at home. Writing on time and empire with specific reference to the British settler colony of Victoria in Australia, Giordano Nanni explains:

> The histories of Western time and Western imperialism are virtually inseparable; for the extension and structural permanence of Western temporalities beyond Western European borders remains contingent on the interruption and reform of 'other' cultures of time (Nanni 2011, p.6).

These "other" cultures were deemed backward and inferior for not respecting the modern and western concept of time. Indeed they would be accused of being stuck in time or even worse 'timeless'. In the case of the Australian Aborigines, this denotation of being timeless was used by the settlers alongside that of being detached from the land. *terra nullius* became the legal basis for British settlers to claim what they saw as empty land, whilst *terra sine tempore*- "no rational rhythm or regularity in the life-style" was used to dismiss the Indigenous inhabitants' way of life

(Nanni 2011, p.9). Colonial and settler colonial invasions violently ruptured Indigenous time whilst simultaneously imposing a new temporal culture upon them. This conquest of the material (space) and the immaterial (time), William Gallois writes, "was well understood to be synonymous with absolute domination" and encapsulated fully the goals of settler colonialism (Gallois 2016, p.252). The domination of Indigenous people in both time and space by settlers was also used to eliminate them from the historical narrative. In Palestine "the coordinates of history were radically re-allocated to underscore biblical Jewish history and de-emphasize Arab history" (Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury 2017, p.402). This temporal re-ordering created a continuity between the ancient Jewish past and the modern Zionist present[17], an attempt by the settler colonial project to Indigenize its settlers.

Today, much of the hegemonic historical record continues to be complicit in the epistemic erasure of Indigenous and subaltern people by othering their narratives and dismissing their temporal traditions. In contemporary settler colonial contexts, the dismissal of the settler colonial process as an ongoing one, which continues to disrupt Indigenous time, is part of this epistemic erasure. This is where memory can be used, as Abu-Lughod and Sa'adi write, as "one of the few weapons available to those against whom the tide of history has turned" (Abu-Lughod and Sa'adi 2007, p.6). Indeed, memory's relationship with time often stands in contrast with 'traditional' history. Historical discourses often follow a linear temporal structure, using chronologies to mark important events and more often than not using a top down approach. Memory on the other hand is neither linear nor chronological and adapts and changes according to the needs of the present. This malleability has left memory

[17] See Shlomo Sands '*The Invention of the Jewish People*' (2009), for more on the Zionist revival of the Jewish ancient past.

open to accusations of unreliability and lacking in historical truth. Whilst the emotional truth memory provides us with, that Alessandro Portelli writes about in his work, is often ignored or marginalized.

For Palestinians, the establishment of Israel ruptured time creating a new temporal reality. The 1948 Nakba created a "demarcation line between two qualitatively opposing periods" (Abu-Lughod and Sa'adi 2007, p.3), in other words, the Nakba became the temporal reference point of the Palestinian experience. Not only were events referred to as either before or after the Nakba, people also became referred to in generational terms with regards to the Nakba. Those that experienced 1948, the loss, displacement and/ or exile first hand are the first Nakba generation or more common in refugee communities "the generation of Palestine". Anaheed al Hardan explains that where in the 60s and 70s they were described as the generation of defeat, now they are considered as the "guardians of memory", coinciding with the revival of the importance of oral history and memory (Al Hardan 2016, p.97). Those that grew up during the military rule period in historic Palestine are the second generation and their sons and daughters are the third generation etc. Sociologist Karl Mannheim explains generation as a "social location" which relates not simply to age but also to the historical-social process (Mannheim 2007, p.292). This categorization of the generations is important to the concept of post-memory which will be explained later in the chapter.

In this chapter, I begin using the data collected during my fieldwork to examine the temporal nature of Palestinian oral history with a particular focus on memories and the transmission of these memories. It explores how Palestinian conceptualization of time is often centered around 1948, the notion of post-memory and the transmission of trauma in the context of the *Nakba al mustamirrah*. In this way, it will illuminate the

important methods in which Palestinian oral history is being articulated as well as revealing some of the spaces in which this is occurring and the challenges it faces.

2. Palestinian memories and time

As previously mentioned, memories often do not follow a linear pattern, moving backwards, forwards and even sideways in total disrespect to chronological confines. This temporal fluidity renders memories distinct from 'traditional' historical discourses which often are articulated chronologically. Nora explains this difference writing that "memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past" (Nora 1989, p.8). This 'perpetual actuality' means that memories are malleable to the time in which they articulated, in other words they change according to how individuals choose to understand them in present day contexts. This "perpetually actual" state means that they can meet the needs of the present. Memory's temporal fluidity is explained by Paolo Jedlowski in his work on memory and sociology:

> Philosophically speaking, what we call 'memory' can be described as the field of a complex temporal dialectic: while on the one hand the flow of life over time entails effects that condition the future, on the other hand it is the present that shapes the past, ordering, reconstructing and interpreting its legacy, with expectations and hopes also helping to select what best serves the future (Jedlowski 2001, p.30).

In simpler terms memory of the past is important in the formulation and imaginations of the future (see chapter six), but memory of the past is dictated by its articulation in the present. In this way, past, present and future are entangled. This cyclical understanding of memory is important because it dismisses the common notion that

memory only relates to the past. Looking at Palestinian memories in particular, we can see fluidity in temporal boundaries in the way that nostalgic and romantic recollections and traumatic memories have continued to seep into the present. We also see this fluidity in that they way that these memories are harnessed to help shape the imaginations of the future.

For Palestinians today, the key site of memory and history is 1948 when both Palestine and its people were removed from the map and from global consciousness. In his article '*Out of Place, Out of Time'* Elias Sanbar explains this not only as a spatial departure, but also a temporal one:

> By departing from space, the Palestinians, about whom the whole world agreed to say 'they do not exist', also departed from time. Their history and their past were denied. Their aspirations and their future were forbidden. Hence they found themselves trapped in an ephemeral dimension, and for half a century they would live in limbo, achieving a very special relationship with the concept of duration. Since the present was forbidden to them, they would occupy a temporal space made up of both a past preserved by a memory afflicted by madness and a dreamt-of future which aspired to restore time. And their obsession with places would be accompanied by a fervent desire to reestablish the normality of everyday lives (Sanbar 2001, p.90).

This "ephemeral dimension" is the settler colonial reality Palestinians found themselves in whether in exile or in the new State of Israel. Thus for Palestinians, the 1948 Nakba is a "focal point for what might be called Palestinian time" (Sa'di and Abu-Lughod 2007, p.4-5). It is the single event that connects all Palestinians, whether living in exile as refugees, as nominal citizens of Israel or under military occupation in the 1967 Territories, to a specific point in history. This point in history is what "Palestinian time" is centered around and became the reference point for all other

events in the Palestinian narrative. Acting as a “demarcation line” (Abu-Lughod and Sa’adi 2007, p.3), Palestinians will frequently describe events in their memories and collective narratives retrospectively or prospectively to the Nakba. For example the Balfour Declaration is well known amongst Palestinians as a documented and written prelude to the Nakba, and later events such as Black September and the First and Second Intifadas are extensions of the Nakba (Sa’di and Abu-Lughod 2007, p.5). In shared memories and narratives, this manifests itself as ‘before the Nakba’ or ‘after the Nakba’. The result of this is that Palestinian memories and narratives do not follow the familiar structure of beginning, middle and end.

This switching between pre-Nakba or post-Nakba, emphasizes the rupture in time created by the establishment of the State of Israel. Rosemary Sayigh wrote about this rupture in her collection of women’s testimonies from the refugee camps in Lebanon. She remarks that a common and striking feature of these life story testimonies is the “primordiality of the exodus from Palestine as beginning, displacing the more usual starting points such as birth, place of origin, or first memories” (Sayigh 1998, p.45). Sayigh also comments that many of the Palestinians ordered their memories around national landmarks and ‘official’ narratives with personal narratives and anecdotes interwoven in between (Sayigh 1998, p.49). This focus on pivotal moments rather than chronology means that often memories are articulated in a very non-linear fashion. Memories therefore tell us more about the meaning of events and the details shared by the narrator tell us what was important. Indeed, Alessandro Portelli tells us that the “organization of the narrative…reveals a great deal of the speakers’ relationship to their own history” (Portelli 1981, p.100).

During my fieldwork interviews and daily informal conversations, it was evident that Palestinian memories and narratives centered around 1948. This point in time, that

for many preceded their birth, is the beginning of their contemporary narratives and memories. Indeed, when asked about their family history, many participants would instinctively start with 1948 and then continue to return to 1948. For example, Raneen began her family's story with the following:

> Well my grandmother is an internal refugee and she's from Haifa. In 1948 her family were expelled to Acca and then a few years after they went to Kufr Yussif and I was born there. This is on my father's side. My mother's side are not refugees. They are from another village, its five minutes from Acca…but in 1948 they were welcoming refugees. In these two villages many refugees came to them. My grandmother used to tell me about how she used to cook and bring food for those people in the 40s and 50s (Raneen 2014).

Noora similarly recounts;

> I am from a small family. My grandfathers are brothers. My father's father and my mother's father. They were both born in the village of Mujaydel which is near Nazareth. It's very close to where I am living now. When they fled, my mother's father was 15 and my father's father was 17. There was a bombing, so they fled out of fear. When they fled they thought after a week they would return. So my mother's father still has the keys to the house. Two, three days after the left they knew they would completely bomb (the village) and nothing would be left… On the 18th of May, all the villagers left the village and some of them went to Yaft el Nasri and some of them went to Nazareth (Noora 2015).

Unprompted, both Raneen and Noora start narrating their family story from 1948, demonstrating Sayigh's argument about the primordiality of the exodus. The centrality of the Nakba to these narratives in the Galilee mirror those of Palestinian narratives elsewhere. The socialization of time means that despite their geographical divisions,

Palestinians share both a collective narrative and a temporal reality that is shaped by the continuous colonization of the land.

In 1967, when Israel occupied what was left of Palestine (an event that became known as *al-Naksa*), Palestinians across the green line physically began to share their memories and experiences on a collective level but also on an individual level through daily interactions. In particular, this sharing of memories and accounts of trauma enabled the Palestinians in the 1948 Territory to situate themselves within a wider Palestinian context. 1967 was a point where Palestinians on both sides were able to orientate themselves to and connect to each other. The collective Palestinian narrative began to reshape amongst the quotidian experience of Israeli oppression. Rana described to me her and her siblings eagerness in the 1980s to learn about this shared collective narrative in spite of the continuing restrictions on literature and communication with the wider Arab world:

> When my brother wanted to study for example, he was applying to Israeli Universities and he wasn't accepted there. So he went to Italy, where he was studying for two years and when he used to return home we were sealed inside 1948. We had no cultural or political communication with the other Palestinians- with our brothers and sisters in the refugee camps and abroad. We were thirsty for a connection or communication with them. So he used to come back with books and music and poetry like Mahmoud Darwish. Because we as a generation, it was forbidden for any Palestinian poet or writer to be taught at our schools. So we were always eager to learn more about what's happening abroad, in Lebanon, in the refugee camps, Marcel Khalifi and Mahmoud Darwish and all that. So I was the one in charge of hiding the books behind my pillow or under my bed for the police not to come and find them in our house (Rana 2015).

The two decades following the *Naksa*, a more assertive Palestinian collective narrative began to emerge and Lena Jayussi explains that this is when it became obvious that "the Nakba was not the last collective site of trauma, but what came later to be seen, through the prism of repeated dispossessions and upheavals, as the foundational station in an unfolding and continuing saga of dispossession, negation and erasure" (Jayussi 2007, p.109-110). Rather than 'moving on' from the past, the Palestinians were able to situate their memories of the past in an understanding that linked it to the present reality and also the blackening out of the future; the continuous Nakba.

3. Al Nakba al mustamirrah ; the settler colonial process

> Every day is the Nakba…from (racial) profiling at the airport…even when we go to the train station, to the bus stations…when someone gets on the bus and looks at you as though you are something unacceptable because you just look somehow different from him...its al-Nakba (Maron 2014).

Maron, above, explains this continuity of the Nakba through its everyday manifestations, indeed settler colonialism in the words of Patrick Wolfe "is a structure, not an event" (Wolfe 2006, p.388). Therefore, settler colonial formations must be understood in terms of incompleteness and ongoing dispossession and attempted elimination of Indigenous peoples. For Palestinians, this process is expressed and understood as *al-nakba al-mustamirra* (the ongoing catastrophe). For the Palestinian citizens, many of the manifestations of this settler colonial reality is enshrined in the very legislation that grants them citizenship. Ranging from limits on commemoration

and freedom of expression to resource and service deprivation. Rana explains this legislatively enshrined process:

> In the best case you could say we are second or third class (citizens) but we are much worse than that. We have to deal with it on a daily basis. In the West Bank it has a different meaning. The occupation there…they kill people, they cut the olive trees…In 48 they do it silently and it is not considered an occupation. It is institutionalized and everything is done by law. When they confiscate your land, when they prevent you from protesting, when they Judaise the Galilee and the Naqab…it is all done by law (Rana 2015).

Wassim, a third generation man from the village of Kufr Bir'am, also reflected on this continuing Nakba in answer to my question on why it is important to commemorate and remember the events of 1948. He explained the following:

> Well to be honest it is not in our hands, 1948 continues. It is not a question of whether you want to (remember it) or not. It is clear in your life today…The same policies are still continuing, the appropriation of the land, the restrictions of Palestinians to specific regions…the idea behind this is that eventually the Palestinians will leave. They have been creating an atmosphere where Palestinians cannot live in calm. (Wassim 2014).

Wassim argues that Israeli policy is to rid the land totally of its Indigenous Palestinian population and to complete the Nakba process that started in 1948. This incompleteness defines settler colonial projects, Indigeneity therefore must also be understood in terms of survival. For Palestinians in the 1948 Territory, this means survival in their homeland despite of the state policies mentioned by Wassim. Maryam emphasized to me that this ongoing colonisation of Palestine should not be normalized. For her, remembering the 1948 Nakba is the "simplest" way to counter it:

> After what happened in 1948, after all the deaths, after this colonialism there is no possibility for us to make this into something nice. It should stay in our minds so that we do not allow this occupation to become normalized. We cannot forget what happened…there were families that were murdered and lands that were cleansed until today. So this is the simplest thing that a person can do, remember and memorize our narrative so we can free ourselves. Colonialism didn't come to give us money and gives us jobs. It came to occupy us, it came to remove people and sit in their place. So again, the simplest thing a person can do is to remember… (Maryam 2014).

Maryam articulates very well the nature of settler colonialism and in the particular case of the Palestinian community in the 1948 Territory. The Israeli State often depicts itself as the bearer of modernization and democracy to the region and in particular to its Arab citizens. By way of contrast, Maryam reminds us here of the goal of settler colonial projects "to remove people and sit in their place'. She goes on to explain the nuances of the ongoing Nakba in the Galilee:

> The situation in the Galilee is hard…there is no work in the Galilee and so many people are leaving to the cities…For each Palestinian village there are approximately three Jewish villages…The occupation in the Galilee is not obvious, it's a "friendly" occupation… (Maryam 2014).

Signaling for inverted commas over the "friendly", Maryam also importantly makes a distinction between the situation in the 1948 Territory and in the West Bank and Gaza. The establishment of Israel divided historic Palestine into fragments, and the continued settlement expansion in the West Bank has created an archipelago of Palestinian spaces. The methods of control and domination vary and yet they seek similar outcomes of displacement and elimination. This geographic division has also, of course, resulted in the division of Palestinians into socio-geographic categories;

Palestinians in the 1948 Territory, Palestinians in the West Bank, Palestinians in Gaza and the Palestinian refugees in the diaspora. Maryam elaborates on this:

> This Nakba is the cutting off of family members, the cutting off of the Arab world…I have friends in Gaza that I cannot visit and they cannot visit me. Same with my friends in the West Bank (Maryam 2014).

Sayigh explains how this continuity of the Nakba reiterates on a time continuum of one tragedy after another:

> Suffering caused by the Nakba has to be understood in terms of a continuing state of rightlessness…the Nakba is not merely a traumatic memory, but continually generates new disasters, voiding the present of any sense of security, and blacking out the future altogether (Sayigh 2013, p.56).

Memories of the Nakba and Palestine must therefore be understood in this continuing state of Nakba, in which every new catastrophe informs the last. The ongoing Nakba is also enabled through what Masalha terms as 'the politics of denial" (Masalha 2012, p.255). This is a denial of the memories and narratives of the Palestinians, not only by the State of Israel and international peace discourses, but also by top-down Palestinian politics.

4. Transmission and the passing of the first Nakba generation

"The old will die and the young will forget" is often attributed to Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion, and indeed it was referenced by many of those who I spoke to during my fieldwork. Although there is yet a source which proves this attribution, it demonstrates well the confidence with which Zionism's founding father believed that Palestinians would forget their history with the passing of time.

Conversely Palestinians often reference this quote, to demonstrate how despite their colonizers attempts, they have not forgotten their narrative and their inherited stories. Quite the reverse in fact, Palestinians continue to memorialise and develop a narrative based on memories and inherited memories from the Nakba generation. These memories hold great value for their emotional truth and this repetition of defiance in the face of Ben Gurion's apparent phrase shows that the importance of remembering Palestine beyond lived experiences and generational boundaries. Beyond the *al-hakawati* tradition in the Middle East, Indigenous people across the world have been preserving their stories against colonial erasure through transmission and inherited memories. Describing storytelling as an act of living resistance, Sium and Ritskes explain the following:

> Stories become mediums for Indigenous peoples to both analogize colonial violence and resist it in real ways. A kind of embodied reciprocity exists between a people and their stories…Contrary to liberal notions of stories as depoliticized acts of sharing, we must recognize stories as acts of creative rebellion. Decolonizing the very act of storytelling (Sium and Ritskes 2013, p.V).

For Sium and Ritskes, the very simple act of sharing stories is a real way to resist against colonial structures or rather a form of decolonization in action. Sharing stories of an Indigenous past revives it in the present and counters the settler colonial impetus to eliminate the traces of Indigenous life. Transmissions of these stories and memories are not always deliberately political or intentional acts of resistance. Indeed memory is how we relate to our present and therefore forms an ordinary and even banal component of human interaction. However when the expression of a past, present and future is in itself a political- as is the case in Indigenous communities- memory becomes political just by 'being'.

Palestinian memories today remain alive and in constant production and reproduction on both an individual and collective level. In the 1948 Territory, this remains true despite the absence of formal state structures to support and develop these narratives. Palestinian civil society plays a major role in this regard and cultural mechanisms have been mobilized as a political tool to present a counter hegemonic narrative. This determination to narrate is evident everywhere and in the last few decades it has begun to manifest itself in a variety of forms including exhibitions, films and theatre. Many Palestinian theatre performances have adopted the *al-hakawati* approach to tell stories of collective memory as part of the political struggle. One such play, *az-Zarub* (The Narrow Lane), presented at the Jerusalem Theatre Festival in 1992 narrates memories and accounts from female Palestinian citizens of Israel (Nassar 2000, p.36-39). Films and music have also adopted the *al-hakawati* approach as a potent and effective means to articulate the collective narrative of the Palestinians in Israel. However the preservation and development of Palestinian narratives is also in a large part due to oral history and specifically the sharing of memories between older generations and the younger generations. These valuable transmissions include recollections of lived experiences, of feelings felt now and then and of stories from a previous generation. The role of the family plays an important part in these memories and narratives. Zein, a third-generation woman from Acca, explained to me how her parents not only told her about her family's story but also the wider Palestine story:

> For the majority of my life my parents told me about our family's history and I also got the general idea of what the Palestinian cause is from them as well… (I was) encouraged to start digging for more information…I went to my uncle's cellar under the house and I found a box of photographs, certificates, receipts from pre 1948…it

> was amazing to see these documents…(and) it was really fun sitting down with my grandmother trying to decipher it all (Zein 2014).

Zein also reveals that this familial narrative sharing encouraged her to take a more active role and to learn and discover more of her family's narrative. Although the memories and narratives vary from person to person, they have common themes of dispossession, loss and continued trauma. They are also centered around the temporal focal point of 1948. Among all the Palestinian communities, every family has a Nakba story whether or not they were exiled, displaced or if they survived. Lubna, also a third-generation women but from Kufr Yussif, explained to me that because her grandfather was a leader in their village he had a lot of stories and he often took on the role as narrator in the family:

> I have a lot of awareness (about my history) and this is down to my family. Often we had political discussions in our house and often they would talk to us about history. My dad is from the family of Touma in Kufr Yussif and his dad the muktar of the village…he had a very foundational role in the village. So he often told us really nice stories from the revolution in 1936…and also from the Nakba in 1948. So there was often this atmosphere of narration… (Lubna 2014).

Similarly, Rana also confirms that first and foremost it was the family that instigated the transmission of more personal memories:

> My family has played a big role in my case. The institutions are more recent. The personal experience of each family…each family has its own memory and its own trauma…we are living their (the first generation) legacy and memory (Rana 2014).

Rana's comment that each family has its own memory and its own trauma is important, it demonstrates how personal narratives and experiences make up the collective Palestinian narrative. Certainly each story has its characteristics and peculiarities, but the commonalities, iterations and cumulative details within these stories intertwine and form the collective Nakba experience. Some stories have even become urban legends, including that of a Palestinian woman fleeing in such a panic that instead of grabbing her baby she grabs a sack of flour. Far from being redundant because of its repetition and myth-like form, anecdotes like these demonstrate the feelings of panic and hysteria during the trauma. Their repetition shows that people believe them as plausible because of the atmosphere at the time. These collective stories from the Nakba are also seen repeated events that happened since, such as Land Day, the first and second Intifada, the Jenin massacre and more recent bombardment campaigns against Gaza. This repetition of the same (but different) stories across time acts as the glue to the collective Palestinian tragedy (Jayussi 2007 p.111).

Ben-Gurion's (apparent) words quoted at the beginning of this section that "the old will die and the young will forget", although being countered, remains a fear in the Palestinian community. Nearly seventy years have passed since the catastrophe of 1948 and those who still have a lived experience of the Nakba are well into their 70s and 80s. For the last two decades there has been a sense of urgency to collect and record oral testimony from this dying generation. Often when explaining my research, as oral history and memory based, to Palestinians during my field work they would jump in with; "This is very important work! We have to collect all the memories before the Nakba generation die." This demonstrates the general attitude towards oral history among many Palestinians, it is seen as an important tool against erasure and

forgetting. Indeed, this fear of forgetting is genuine and not without substance. The institutionalized and structural attempts by Israel to eliminate Palestine from collective memory since 1948 have been aggressive and consistent. This fear was dramatized by Salman Natour, a Palestinian novelist and playwright, wrote a play called *Memory* that was performed across 48. The collection of stories and narratives from different periods are performed in a tradition *al hakawati* manner. The final monologue reveals the narrators fears on forgetting:

> My memory has betrayed me, and slowly I am losing it. I fear the black day when I find myself without any memory just a body…that wanders in the streets and forests…until a hunter finds it. I, who fought the windmills, lost my memory and turned into nothing, exactly nothing. He (the hunter) will take me to the house where I was born and hand me over to my family…He'll go to his family and tell them about an old man who lost his memory and pompously proclaim, "If I hadn't intervened he would have been eaten by the hyenas." We shall be eaten by the hyenas if we lose our memory. We shall be eaten by the hyenas (Sa'di and Abu-Lughod 2007, p.18).

Natour's sharp "we shall be eaten by the hyenas*"* is a warning; either remember or be eaten by scavengers. The importance of memory was also rather eloquently articulated to me by, Raneen a second generation woman, who said;

> If we lose our memory they will consume us. They can occupy us, transfer us, they can do whatever they want…but they cannot occupy our memories. This is the only thing that we can fight with…our memories (Raneen 2014).

This fight to preserve memories in the face of the loss of the first generation is being conducted in a variety of mediums, including through the mass collection or oral testimonies by both Birzeit University and the American University of Beirut and through various online forums such as 'Palestine Remembered'. However it is also

being conducted on a local level, through commemorative events. One particular event I followed extensively during my field work was '*Yom Tarshiha*' (Tarshiha Day) which commemorates the fall of the village of Tarshiha in the upper western Galilee. *Yom Tarshiha* has become an important day on the calendar for Palestinians in the Galilee. Nizar, one of the local *Yom Tarshiha* organizers and a second generation woman, explained that the annual event is an attempt to make sure that the new generation in Tarshiha remembers the village's history through the sharing and passing on of historical narratives:

> Tarshiha is special. It is an example of what happened to Palestine as a whole. Remembering what happened to our village is also important because time is running out for the older generation. We need to make sure their stories do not die with them (Nizar 2014).

On the 28th of October 1948, as part of Zionist forces 'Operation Hiram', Tarshiha was subjected to aerial bombardment and relentless artillery barrage. Many homes and buildings were destroyed and dozens of people were killed. By the 1st of November, most of the villagers had been forced to flee their homes into neighbouring countries. According to Pappe, the order was given by the Zionist forces to "clear" Tarshiha (Pappe 2006, p.178). Tarshiha was one of the villages that suffered the most in terms of lives lost and infrastructure destroyed. The majority of village's residents were expelled beyond the borders of the new state of Israel, however a small number survived who remained close to the village and were eventually allowed to return. Today the village has a population of approximately 5,000 including both Muslims and Christians. Tarshiha and other Arab localities in the Galilee face a variety of issues at the hands of the state including denial of building permits and land theft conducted under various legal guises such as the Absentee Property Law. Another

guise was in 1963, when the neighboring Israeli town of Maalot annexed Tarshiha and declared that the two communities would share a municipality. Most residents of Tarshiha saw this as a move to gain control over Tarshiha's historic land. The village today is totally encircled by Jewish Israeli towns which continue to encroach on its land. Nizar explained that this type of land policy is not only about strangling villages, but is also about attempting to minimise the Palestinian identity and destroying the sense of community within Palestinian villages. Nizar said:

> Families cannot expand here, they have to move somewhere else. Somewhere where there is more land. So in this way people are splitting up and moving. Even on our ID cards it doesn't say Tarshiha. It says Maalot Tarshiha (Nizar 2014).

In 2005 activists from the village decided to combine the commemoration of the fall of the village with an event that would engage residents and descendants of the village with their collective and local narrative through shared memories and oral testimonies. Indeed Edward Casey argues that commemoration and public mourning is an "intensified remembering" and deepens the bond between the bereaved and the lost ones. (Casey 2004, p.187). In this there is a shared character of bereavement as a result of a similar experience of loss by members of a community. This communal grief gives another element to mourning, it makes the memory sharper and the commemoration more poignant. This collective nature of memories is emphasized by Lena Jayyusi who notes that amongst many Palestinian accounts, the voice is nearly always in the collective first person (Jayyusi 2007, p.112).

The group *Shabab Tarshiha* (Tarshiha youth) became instrumental the organisation of the commemoration and the event now includes activities throughout the day, followed by a march throughout the old parts of the village and ending in a rally. The

activities during the day include walking tours of the village and storytelling by those that remain from the first generation of survivors of the Nakba at different points of the tour. Local documentary filmmaker and an active organiser in *Yom Tarshiha,* Basel, reiterated the understanding that the Zionist founding fathers expected that the old generation of Palestinians would eventually die and that the new generation would forget their history. “So we must make sure that they don’t forget,” he asserted (Basel 2014). The tours are used as a mechanism for ‘passing on’ memories of between the generations. Indeed combining the physical acting of walking and narrating proved to be an effective way in which to link the narrative with the space.

Following the tours, the main event usually begins with a silent candle-lit march through the village led by the village elders and prominent Palestinian figures form 48. In 2014, Haneen Zoabi, a member of Israel’s parliament and a well-known political activist from the Galilee took part in the event. The march ends in the village square where a rally is held which includes speeches, poems, songs and dancing. The rally, typical of similar events in 48, incorporates Palestinian national symbols including flags and keffiyehs. Over the three years in which I attended this event for my fieldwork, the event has always kicked off with *Muwtani*, a song which has now become the de facto national anthem for the Palestinian community in 48. *Muwtani* was written by the Palestinian poet Ibrahim Tuqan in 1934 and was used up until the mid 90s as the unofficial Palestinian national anthem. It was also adopted by Egypt at the height of pan-Arabism. Even though the PNA adopted the PLO preferred song ‘*Fida’I*’ as its national anthem in 1994, *Muwtani* has remained the anthem of choice for the Palestinian community in historic Palestine (Sorek 2015, p.78). Despite the national symbolism, its focus on October 28th 1948 rather than the national date for the Nakba commemoration makes Yom Tarshiha distinctly local.

Yom Tarshiha is also an opportunity for the village to reconnect and remember those living in exile. In the 2014 event, there was a particularly poignant speech given by a local artist, Cecile, in which she transcended the village's geographical borders by reminding the crowd of the village's descendants in the refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and elsewhere. Indeed much of the village's population was expelled in 1948 beyond the borders of the new state, making them refugees. These refugees mostly reside in Bourj al Barajneh, a camp located in the southern suburbs of Beirut. Earlier in the day, another local artist, Rana, painted a mural of a tree with the village's families written in the branches in the centre of the village. The names of the families included those who had fled in 1948, again emphasising the dispersed nature of the village.

Figure 4.

So far the event has managed to take place within a grey area of legality, indeed the organisers are granted approval from the municipality, however the event is monitored. In 2014, the Israeli police made their presence known by parking their vehicle indiscreetly at the rally and monitoring the participants. Commenting on their presence to some participants, a young man, Ayman, said to me defiantly; “Let them watch, we don’t care”. This defiance is not only coming from the village, although predominantly made up of village residents, participants in the event also include those from neighbouring villages attended. Nizar, explained its appeal;

> Tarshiha is a symbol for the Nakba. People want to feel Palestinian; they want to participate in something that is not for the Israeli state (Nizar 2014).

Yom Tarshiha, as Nizar states, serves to strengthen Palestinian identity through oral history, despite decades of the Israeli state attempting to weaken it. The tours and the march through the village simultaneously reclaim a narrative whilst also making a claim to collective space. The urgent focus however, in the last few years has been on the sharing and preservation of memories from the first Nakba generation. These “guardians of memory” are now few in number as we begin to enter nearly the eight decade since the Nakba. This generation, once considered by the nationalist project as a generation of defeat, are the only people to have a lived experience of Palestine before the Nakba. They are the ‘living’ link to Palestine. Once they are all gone, Palestinians will have to rely on their inherited stories and memories from this generation.

5. Collective trauma and Post-memory

Initially, sharing and narration of what had happened during 1948 did not happen with immediate effect. Most Palestinians both in exile and within the new Jewish State were in shock in the years that followed. This initial shock lingered and intensified for the Palestinian community that became citizens as they were placed under military rule. This military rule not only restricted their movements but also their freedom of expression. Nizar explained this period and the initial silence:

> It is hard, very hard. I was the first generation after the Nakba. I was born in 1961 and I grew up without hearing anything about the Nakba. But I just had to look at the people and realize something was not right. I looked at my Aunty who was paralyzed from the war in 1948… It was later I realized that there was a circle of silence, with no-one talking about the Nakba. I started to hear about it when I was 13 or 14. I knew that there was something called the Nakba, but the issue wasn't talked about, it was not spoken… I think because of the shock. I think people were shocked for many years. And because there was the military government until 1967. People were afraid. People lost everything. It is something hard to hear about…Al-Nakba. Mahmoud Darwish once said 'There was a place called Palestine and there still is a place called Palestine'. There was a land and people who were living just like people all over the world. The Nakba was something that stopped it. The Palestinians did not just lose their land and identity…it is not just material. It is something emotional, we lost our sense of belonging. And this is part of the suffering that the world doesn't see it. It is invisible. Some parts of the trauma are invisible, psychiatric things, depression or trauma or post-trauma. Because of this it is hard. It is really hard (Nizar 2014).

Nizar recalls only hearing about the events of the Nakba in the mid-70s, nearly three decades after. The brutality of the military rule period meant that the Nakba and Palestine in general remained an unspoken elephant in the room. Haim Bresheeth

demonstrates this through his work on Palestinian cinema and explains that “a long time had to pass until the Nakba could become a live topic within Palestinian cultural life…a whole generation of Palestinians had to group up with hardly any cinematic representations of the great catastrophe of 1948” (Bresheeth 2007, p.163). The initial trauma coupled with a period of military rule which was characterized by surveillance and repression, left much of the first generation reluctant to speak on the Nakba and in Nizar’s words ‘afraid’. Nizar continues on to explain that the loss of Palestine was not only material but also emotional. She claims that Palestinians in the 1948 Territory have lost a sense of belonging and suffer from what she defines as a ‘post-trauma’. Interestingly this idea of post-trauma was reiterated by Lubna in a separate interview:

> I think the first generation is traumatised. The second generation is post-traumatised, or is facing secondary trauma. The third generation is stronger. I see that third generation is at a stage of radical change that is facing the whole Arab world... After Land Day when there was mass popular uprising against the Zionist policies and we felt… that the struggle is not just with the West Bank and Gaza but also inside (al dakhl). So out of Land Day came these feelings and the second generation passed this on to the third generation. The third generation…I don’t know why but the radical changes that are happening in Tunis and Egypt and Syria…I don’t know if we would call it a revolution….but there are changes around us (Lubna 2014).

Lubna suggests a snowballing effect of the Nakba memory, in which each generation adds its own experiences and feelings and passes it on to the next generation. She discusses the importance of Land Day as a key marker in Palestinian history in which there became a wider recognition that the Palestinian struggle existed beyond the Green Line. Lubna also contextualizes her conversation and recollections with me within a broader regional context of the Arab Spring which was also repeated by other

fieldwork participants. This highlights the importance of the present-day context on post-memories. The historical-social situation of each generation adds to the body of post-memories and to the collective narrative of the Nakba and Palestine.

Rana, a second generation artist from Tarshiha, also described the period of military rule to me:

> My father wasn't very much open to talk about his trauma…He never really initiated any information. But when something happened he would talk about it. He would start revealing more information… They were scared and traumatised to talk. That's why my father, I believe, wasn't able to talk. He was scared, he was terrified that anybody could come and arrest him. And that passed on to the new generation, to my brothers as well (Rana 2015).

Rana describes the unwillingness of her father to talk about the events of 1948 and attributes this to the fact that he was scared and traumatized. The combination of the mass societal disruption and the repression of any articulation of what happened resulted in a collective silence among the Palestinian community in the 1948 Territory. Outside of this community, especially among the Palestinians in exile, memories and stories of the Nakba were also repressed but this time by the Palestinian political elites. This was a concerted effort to hide the humiliation of losing the war and to support the predominant nationalist narratives at the time (Allan 2005, p.49). Whilst certain aspects of the past were focused on, others are ignored or covered up in both conscious and unconscious efforts.. This inevitably led to the overshadowing of painful individual memories .

These inherited and intergenerational memories and continuous narratives of the Nakba are grounded in the theoretical notion of post-memory. This post-memory

discourse plays a huge role in understanding the identity of post-Nakba Palestinians (those that were born after 1948). Post-memory research was initiated by the field of Holocaust Studies, coinciding with a shift of interest from historical fact to perception and representation of historical events. Karen Goertz argues that this interest was sparked by a wish to keep the Holocaust from "receding into the cold storage of history" (Goertz 1998, p.33). The term post-memory was coined and developed by scholar Marianne Hirsch who has written extensively on memory transfer across generations among Holocaust survivors, particularly focusing on photographs as a medium and trigger of post-memory. She explains post-memory as the situation where everyday reality is overshadowed by the inherited memory of a more significant past. Hirsch further defines post-memory as the "relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before" (Hirsh 2008, p.106).

For Palestinians, these transmitted memories and shared narratives of 1948 are received within the context of the continuous nature of the settler colonial structure. This continuity of Nakba, or *al Nakba al mustamirrah* in Arabic, where the past continues to repeat itself in the present creates a collective trauma that transcends generational boundaries. Its legacy continues to haunt Palestinians as these recollections of the originating event are seen through the prism of current day experiences, cultural symbols and images. In this way, even through this point of rupture in Palestinian time precedes the birth of most Palestinians it continues to traumatize the subsequent generations. Of this cyclical trauma, Masalha writes:

> We should not be enslaved- obsessed- by the past, but neither should we deny the potency of historical memory and its centrality to the continuing trauma…for Palestinians, mourning sixty-three years of al-Nakba is not just about remembering

> the ‘ethnic cleansing’ of 1948: it is also about marking the ongoing dispossession and dislocation (Masalha 2012, p.253-254).

Masalha recognizes the link between the permeation of the past in the present and the ongoing trauma. He also importantly points out that the Palestinian relationship with the Nakba is not one of enslavement to the past but rather about recognition of the Palestinian temporal cycle. This cycle is one that repeats trauma upon trauma as the settler colonial process continues. Journalist Joe Sacco captured this notion of continuous tragedy during his time in Gaza where he investigated a forgotten massacre in Khan Yunis and Rafah in 1956-1957. He writes that ‘the past and the present cannot be so easily disentangled: they are part of a remorseless continuum, a historical blur” (Sacco 2000, p xi.). It is this “remorseless continuum” that refuses to allow the pain of the Nakba to diminish over time and to leave the ‘past in the past’.

The demand to leave the past behind as bygones is a tactic often invoked by those in positions of power in peace process discourses around the world, particularly in contexts of colonialism and settler colonialism. Indeed apologies for past crimes are often accompanied with the demand to forget and ‘move forward’. In the case of settler state apologies to Indigenous people, these apologies often neutralizes the historical narrative while simultaneously ignoring the ongoing oppressive relationship between the state and the indigenous people (Corntassel and Holder 2008). Outside of the settler colonial context, forgetting is sometimes deemed imperative to political transition. The pact of forgetting (*el pacto del olvido*) invoked by Spanish political parties following the death of General Franco and transition to democracy has invoked intense debates about historical memory in Spain (Leggott 2009, p.25). This pact demanded that difficult questions about the past and possible persecutions for mass suffering were to be forgotten about. More recently, this institutional silence has

been challenged with a significant amount of academic and popular publications looking at the Franco period. These works particularly draw upon post-memory and deal with the issue of collective trauma. Whilst there are those that argue it can cause unnecessary distractions and divisions, Sarah Leggott argues that it has allowed for the working through of trauma and a collective movement of remembering (Leggott 2009, p.28).

Although post-memory can facilitate the transference of trauma, it is also a key factor in addressing collective trauma, particularly when the past infiltrates the present in the form of a continuous cycle of tragedies. In the case of Palestine, where oral history constitutes a major source for the collective historical narrative, post-memories are a way in which Palestine can be preserved and revived. They contribute to a counter narrative which is constantly trying to overcome the trauma of the Nakba by refusing both epistemic and physical erasure. Commemoration is also an integral part of dealing with societal trauma, creating a new form of interconnection between past and present as was demonstrated earlier with the case of *Yom Tarshiha*.

6. Nostalgia and the merging of tenses

Commemoration of the past can invoke nostalgic sentiments and recollections. Fawaz Turki, a Palestinian writer and first generation survivor of the Nakba, writes about an almost involuntary nostalgic memory of Palestine:

> For it always comes back, that past, as if it were an ache, an ache from a sickness a man didn't know he had. Like the smell of ripened figs at a Perth supermarket that would place me, for one blissful moment under that big fig tree in the backyard of our

> house in Haifa. Like the taste of sea salt in my mouth as I swam in the Indian Ocean that would take me back to the Mediterranean, our own ancient sea (Turki 1998, p.10).

Turki's reflection of Palestine is both bitter like "sea salt" and sweet like the "ripened figs", summing up rather poetically this dual nature of nostalgic sentiment. Nostalgia informs a huge part of individual and collective memory of Palestine before the Nakba. This is also manifested in the Palestinian literature produced in the decades following 1948 in which nostalgia became "the most characteristic element" (McKean Parmenter 1994, p.43). Nostalgia is the work of memory, where recollections of the past are selected to suit the needs of the present. Nostalgia comes from two Greek words, *nóstos* meaning to 'return home' and *álgos* meaning a 'longing'. Coined in the 17th century, nostalgia was understood as a medical condition that could be cured, but by the 21st century it became understood as an "incurable modern condition" (Boym 2001, p.xiv). Nostalgia is now a cross-disciplinary scholarly subject with a particularly strong relationship to collective memories and national narratives. Svetlana Boym explains it as "a longing for a home that no longer exists or as never existed" (Boym 2001, p.xiii). However nostalgia still retains a bad reputation and is often regarded as a paralyzing sentiment. In the context of Palestine this is perhaps best epitomized in the post-Oslo peace process discourse. This discourse is one that favors forgetting the past, hence relegating and sidelining issues of 1948- such as the refugees and the Palestinian citizens of Israel. The focus of this discourse is thus on a future that ignores not only the past but of course the present settler-colonial reality. Nostalgia is also charged with idolizing the past, making it seem like a better place to live in than the present. In this way "nostalgia is seen in opposition to progress… (it) paralyzes political agency in the present…"(Saloul 2012, p.16). Indeed a key concept to modernity is to free oneself from the "shackles of the past". One of

the founders of the Palestinian Museum, Omar Al-Qattan reiterates this and describes nostalgia as a dream like imprisonment:

> In 1983, the great Russian film-maker Andrei Tarkovsky called nostalgia a Russian national disease. The same may perhaps be said of Palestine. Sometimes it seems to me that we become prisoners of an angry, stubborn and bitter tenacity to return to the past, to the land that has been taken away, to a sort of national childhood from which none of us wishes to awaken (Al-Qattan 2007, p.200-201).

Nostalgia can indeed be debilitating, however it can also play a hugely empowering role in collective memories, and particularly those of Indigenous people who continue to experience loss and dispossession. Nostalgia is a way in which to preserve knowledge of the past despite furious attempts to negate it. Although nostalgia often omits the less attractive aspects of the past, it simultaneously highlights those aspects which are missing from the present. Mahmoud Darwish offered an empowering conceptualization of nostalgia in his poetic eulogy for Edward Said:

> And Nostalgia for yesterday? A sentiment not fit for an intellectual. Unless it is used to spell out the stranger's fervor for that which negates him. My nostalgia is a struggle over a present which has tomorrow by the balls (Darwish 2004).

For Darwish, nostalgia can be used to resist the negation and erasure of Palestine. Nostalgia, he wrote, is a way to "struggle" over the present reality which is strangling the prospect of a future. In this way nostalgia is not only retrospective; a romanticisation of the past, it can also be seen as prospective; an articulation for a better tomorrow which fully embraces the past. Indeed what we want from the future can dictate how we express nostalgic sentiment. Nostalgia is thus not simply a longing for the past, but also a longing for those elements in the past that are absent from the present. In this way, it is a sentiment that disregards linear time and can

even be a means of 'challenging the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress' (Boym 2001, p.xv). Elaborating on this, Boym argues that "nostalgia feels stifled within the conventional confines of time and space" (Boym 2001, p.xiv). Rana, uses nostalgic sentiment to express her anger with particular reference to the current grievances facing her village, Tarshiha:

> Tarshiha…it had everything. Its future was a big city. But that dream was killed. By confiscating the land, turning us into their slaves and making us dependent on them on so many levels. When you confiscate the land you kill everything. You kill the expansion of the village, you kill the business and the culture (Rana 2014).

What is interesting with Rana's statement is that she describes the transformation of the village into the city as a dream. This sits in contradiction to nostalgic sentiments for rural life among Palestinians living in Haifa discussed in the fourth chapter. However Rana's nostalgia for the big city that could have been is perhaps more related to the fact that the village is unable to expand and thus an articulation of this frustration. Indeed Tarshiha, like most of the Palestinian villages in the Galilee is suffering from a serious lack of land and shortage of housing.

Sitting beyond these conventional temporal boundaries, nostalgia also places Palestine in an irrealis mode of 'what could have been'. Jayussi confirms that Palestinian memories and testimonies are often merge the past tense with the subjunctive tense. The subjunctive tense is used to state unreality, something that is not actuality or a conditional state of affairs. It can also be used to express wishes and desired or less desired outcomes. Jayussi describes the use of this tense as a "structuring trope directly linked to the here-and-now stance; to a knowing now what it all was going to amount to, and a not-knowing-then-what-it-was-to-become; the tensing within the past tense: future past" (Jayussi 2007, p.118). She goes further to

explain that this is not merely an expression of the past expressed in the present day context, but also an expression of the past that is still working its way into the present. Jayussi also notes that it is quite common in these testimonies that the past and present tense merge and are used interchangeably *(*Jayussi 2007, p.118). Maryam, a third generation lawyer living in Haifa, uses the subjunctive tense to explain her frustration and anger with the past and how it affects her today:

> If there wasn't an occupation and if 1948 hadn't happened I would probably be in a different phase of my life (Maryam 2014).

Zein also uses the subjunctive to express disbelief at the present reality:

> I feel frustrated when I look around and think what it (Palestine) should have been... I can't believe that this is the reality that we live in (Zein 2014).

The subjunctive tense leaves us with the feeling that the past is unfinished and that time is not moving forward (Jayussi 2007, p.118). It is as though Palestine is in a subjunctive mode or 'as if' mode where the everyday reality is overshadowed by the inherited memory of a more significant past. For Palestinians however, it is not simply an overshadowing but also a past that seeps into the present because of the continuous trauma. Palestinians refer to this as *al Nakba al mustamirrah* (the continuing Nakba in Arabic).

7. Conclusion

> My grandfather used to take us on trips when we were children around Palestine and would tell us that "every time you see a cactus, know that there was a village there". This was one of the first things that opened our eyes as children… all of this and the

> daily stories that you live, every day from your grandparents and your parents and the city that you live in. This opened my eyes to understanding the place and our history. That the Nakba is not just history, it is also daily life. The struggle against the occupation is not just a historical struggle of my grandparents. It is a daily struggle and I live it. It is a first-hand personal struggle (Rasha 2016).

What we see from the various articulations of *al Nakba al mustamirrah,* is that Palestine's past is very much it's present. In the above excerpt from an interview with Rasha, she explains that the stories that she 'lives' are also the stories that she heard from her grandparents, parents and from her surroundings. She goes on to affirm that the "Nakba is not just history, it is also daily life". However the Nakba of 1948 is the temporal focal point of the contemporary Palestinian experience. Abu Lughod and Sa'adi's describe the Nakba as a "demarcation line" in which the Palestinian historical narrative became referred to in terms of pre-1948 and post-1948. This is reflected in the memories and post memories of Palestinians in all their socio-geographic fragments. However the settler colonial project not only ruptures Indigenous time, it also demands that surviving Indigenous populations forget their pre-invasion past. Frantz Fanon explained:

> Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the natives brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverse logic, it turns its attention to the past of the colonized people, and distorts it, disfigures and destroys it (Fanon 1963, p.210).

The distortion and destruction was exemplified in the Zionist project's devastation of the Palestinian landscape in an attempt to severe the land from its people. However, because of oral history's nonmaterial nature, it survived with the people continues to

challenge both *terra nullius* and *terra sine tempore*, notions that attempted to dominate Indigenous life and land. Indeed the sharing of stories and memories of Palestine's past across generations revives it in the present and counters the settler colonial impetus to eliminate the traces of Indigenous life.

Chapter 4

Space for memory and memory of space in Haifa

1. Introduction

At the start of my fieldwork, I was not intending to include Haifa in my thesis. I wanted to focus on the Galilee as a geographically cohesive case study to illuminate how oral history is being used in spaces of Indigenous resistance. However, the decision to write a whole chapter on Haifa came during my data evaluation process. Reading through my interviews and my notes from meetings, events and informal conversations I had with people, the importance of Haifa became more evident. As the political and cultural capital of the Palestinians in the 1948 Territory[18] many Palestinians from the Galilee are living and working there and as such many of my interviews and meetings took place in Haifa. One such interview was with Ayed, a third-generation local artist, activist and DJ. After we had completed the formal interview in a café, we took a walk in Wadi Nisnas- a Palestinian neighbourhood in down town Haifa. As we walked through the alleyways, Ayed told me of his own connection to Wadi Nisnas, different life events that had happened there as well as a general history of the neighbourhood. At one point, he said: "here it feels like a Palestinian village, not a city." He further elaborated explaining that many of the residents were indeed descendants from the Galilean villages and that they had recreated this village atmosphere in the heart of down town Haifa.

[18] Nazareth enjoyed this status for a long time, particularly as it was the only Palestinian Arab city to survive the ethnic cleansing in 1948. However over the last two decades, NGOs and political parties have moved their center of operations to Haifa where they have more access to material and human resources.

My conversations with Ayed revealed how much memory informs the (re) construction of Palestinian space in the 1948 Territory. In this case, the villages in the Galilee are recreated not only in atmosphere in Wadi Nisnas, but also in cobbled alleyways and the social makeup of the community. Earlier that day, in the 'formal' interview, Ayed said something else that made me consider the importance of Haifa within the Palestinian narrative:

> We didn't grow up normally… I always imagine what if Palestine was occupied by France (rather than Israel)? There are many questions about the structure of the occupation and how it really influences us. But let's think about the question what if Palestine wasn't occupied by anyone and it developed by itself? If I think about the many stories I've heard from people who tell me about Haifa in the 20s and 30s where there were girls hanging out in bikinis on the beach…not that I am saying bikinis equal freedom but if you go back and look at this period in history its amazing. Palestinian people in the 20s and 30s were really open and they were dealing with the structures within society in an easy way (Ayed 2015).

Not only does Ayed engage in the subjunctive mode, described in the previous chapter, he also describes a scene that conflicts with many essentialist and orientalist depictions of Palestine before the establishment of Israel. The scene is of girls in bikinis on the beaches of Haifa in the 1920s and 1930s. Bikinis however, were invented by Jacques Heim in 1946 and launched on the French Riviera (Met Museum 2017). It is thus unlikely that there were women in bikinis on the beaches of Haifa in the 1920s and 1930s. Nonetheless, despite its questionable historicity, this post-memory of Haifa is valuable because it tells us much about how urban Palestine space is reconstructed in contemporary collective memory. The summoning of these "stories" of Haifa pre-1948 to conjure an image of what Palestine could be like without

the settler colonial occupation, also demonstrates a memory practice that is future orientated.

The development of distinctly Palestinian space in Haifa since the Nakba has happened despite of the state's "mixed city" label which attempts to disguise the presence of Palestinians and their historical narrative through the use of a religious tolerance and diversity discourse rather than the remnants of an Indigenous society. Indeed superficially, the "mixed city" seems antithetical to Zionism's foundational tenant of an exclusive state for the Jews. Yet, the reality in these "mixed cities" across the 1948 Territory is the deliberate shrinking and eliminating of Palestinian space, something which Sari Hanafi has defined as "spaciocide" (2012). Although Israel's policies of Palestinian spcaciocide and Judaization are consistent throughout historic Palestine, they manifest themselves in different ways in urban and rural settings. The urban landscape in the 1948 Territory is particularly interesting because it is here where both Jewish Israelis and Palestinians reside together and where their lives crossover more than anywhere else. Yet despite this crossover, for the most part they remain separate and apart because of this spaciocide and Judaization. Geographers Oren Yiftachel and Haim Yacobi explain this occurrence as a historical process of Judaization:

> A clear spatial and mental segregation exists between Arabs and Jews in Israel, and hence the occurrence of `mixed' urban spaces where Jews and Arabs reside within the same city is generally both exceptional and involuntary. Rather, it has resulted from a historical process during which the Israeli territory, including previously Arab cities, has been profoundly Judaized. In this process, the Palestinian community remaining in Israel after the 1948 war has become a marginalized and dispossessed minority (Yiftachel and Yacobi 2003, p.673).

As Yiftachel and Yacobi explain, this historical process of the Judaization of space has not been a 'natural' or gradual one. Rather it has been a violent process which has sought to eliminate and erase what was present before. This process however also requires Palestinians to forget and it is partly the perseverance of Palestinian memory that continues to hinder the total Judaization of the 1948 Territory. In this way, memory serves as a tool of resistance against erasure. In this urban context, it is clear that Israel's war on Palestinian memory is intimately land and space related. To deny their historical claims expressed through their memories is also to deny them physical space in the present day.

This chapter explores the recreation and development of Palestinian space in Haifa, the role memory plays in it and the affect it has on Palestinian-ness. It also looks how this space has accelerated memory works and how Haifa plays a central role in the development of the Palestinian narrative in the 1948 Territory. Furthermore, this chapter will look critically at the "mixed city" discourse, which in its very terminology illuminates the essentialist nature of Zionist ideology which homogenises Jews and 'others' into two distinct categories.

2. Settler colonial urban space

Urban spaces and more specifically cities are often considered as the centres of modernization, progress and politics[19]. They are home to the political establishment, the intelligentsia and the legal institutions which shape the parameters of the nation state. Indeed the city often plays a key role in nation building and the maintenance of

[19] See Dahl, R.A (1982), Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy and Held, D. (2006), Models of Democracy

national identity as well as the bestowal of citizenship. This notion of citizenship is often attributed to Greek city republics, also considered the birth place of democracy. Yet the deep class divides, slaves and other oppressed groups that existed in these cities who were not granted any rights at all is often omitted from this popular democracy story.

Cities today remain sites of deep rooted inequalities, sedimented violence and hierarchal tiers of citizenship (Harvey 1996, Lefebvre 1991). Much of the hegemonic discourse on citizenship considers it as an inclusive combination of rights granted by the state in return for the fulfilment of certain obligations. In *'The Right to the City'* Henri Lefebvre considers the concept of citizenship spatially and discusses the connection between the city and citizenship. Lefebvre argues that social rights must be claimed through the city and thus the concept of 'the right to the city' is about claiming a legitimate presence in it. Lefebvre makes a radical call for the restructuring of power relations in the city from the state to its citizens (Lefebvre 1991). Indeed because of such polarization and inequality, cities are usually at the forefront of ethnic and political conflict. In settler societies this is even more so where the city is transformed into the final frontier. Here it may be useful to draw upon Michel de Certeau's distinction between space and place:

> In short, space is a practiced place. Thus the street, geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers. In the same way, an act of reading is the space produced by the practice of a particular place: a written text, i.e. a place constituted by a system of signs (De Certeau 1984, p.117).

De Certeau problemtises space as a static entity by using the metaphor of a street and its relationship to pedestrians. Understanding space as an ever evolving production of relations and at the forefront of evolving settler colonial and Indigenous

relations helps us understand the dynamics of Israel's "mixed cities". It is in these "mixed cities", that the settler state reduces the Palestinian residents to an emblematic tool in which it can demonstrate to the international community its diversity and plurality. Useful to this chapter in particular is the work by Yiftachel and Yacobi who have pulled this literature on the city and space, together with the settler colonial paradigm to address the 'mixed cities' in Israel. They explain that Israel falls under the category of an internal settler society:

> Internal settler societies involve the planned ethnicization of `internal frontiers', in which the state manipulates the local ethnic geography to further the interests of a dominant ethnic group (Yiftachel and Yacobi 2003, p.677).

The Judaization of these internal frontiers are about conquering place and space, in other words not simply physical sites but also the conceptualization and imaginations of these sites. This is where memory and collective memory becomes a key part of the settler colonial story. Memories are stories about the past, framed by the present with their own "spatial trajectories":

> In modern Athens, the vehicles of mass transportation are called metaphorai. To go to work or to come home one takes a "metaphor"- a bus or a train. Stories could also take this noble name: every day they traverse and organise places: they select and link them together; they make sentences and itineraries out of them. They are spatial trajectories (De Certeau 2011, p.115).

The main outcome of settler colonial projects is the rearrangement of physical spaces and people. Although the consequences of this rearrangement is catastrophic for Indigenous people, it is not limited to them and also affects those people who are exploited and oppressed as part of the settler colonial process such as slaves and migrant workers (Mar and Edmonds 2010). This rearrangement, indubitably, is not a

peaceful nor a passive act, but rather a violent restructuring to make way for a new society with new social and spatial practices. It often begins with the initial settler colonial invasion and a war, in the case of Palestine this was the 1948 Nakba, followed by a no less violent continuous erosion and elimination of the Indigenous through more subtle means such as land appropriation, assimilation, educational institutions and cultural appropriation. Spatial displacement of Indigenous people was and still is legitimised by placing them within western "stadial theories on human development" (Mar and Edmonds 2010, p.3). In other words, Indigenous people are usually positioned as 'behind' or 'backwards' in terms of social development in comparison to the settler society. In this way, claims can be made about the regressive or 'developing' nature of Indigenous societies. This is perhaps best epitomised by the settler colonial and colonial rhetoric in which the colonisers claim to have superior knowledge on how to use Indigenous land than that of the Indigenous people. The rupture of Indigenous communities by settler colonial invasion is achieved through mass displacement both physical and mental, transforming the Indigenous people to the strange and alien. A common phrase often said to me during my fieldwork was; "I feel alienated/ like a stranger in my own country". A feeling that not only refers to the physical and aesthetic transformation of the landscape, but also the institutional exclusion which seeks to severe the connection between the Palestinians and the land.

For Veracini, settler colonialism is about making and un making space (Veracini 2010, p.179). This making and unmaking is a continuous process, in which the desired outcome is the eventual elimination of the Indigenous people and the conquering of their space. Space itself is also a continuous process, in particular with regards to the production of relations in both physical and mental realms (Lefebvre 1991). Within

this understanding, space is not static and can be manipulated to serve the needs of those who occupy it. In addition to exclusively serving the needs of Jewish Israelis, space in the 1948 Territory is still being used as a geopolitical tool to conquer and contain memories and narratives of Palestinians- another form of Indigenous elimination.

As discussed in the previous two chapters, Palestinians are intimately tied to their land and their memories and stories reflect this connection. However this connection between the land and Palestinians is sometimes manipulated in Zionist narratives in an attempt to homogenise the Palestinian. Common to many settler colonial projects is that they emphasise the rural aspect of Indigenous societies and memories of the agricultural lifestyle and the 'traditional' are twisted into the feudal and the backwards. In an attempt to claim difference for itself, Israel wants to eliminate the memory of the Palestinian city and Palestinian urban life.

Palestinian-ness is further eliminated from space with the simple removal of Indigenous place names and as well as the name of 'Palestine' itself. Today, in Israeli society, places are often referred to in racialized language; "Arab town", "Arab village", "mixed cities". In all these instances, it is necessary for the hegemonic discourse to identify where the other (Palestinian Arabs) are present. This need for racial identification in the settler colonial discourse becomes a key feature of space. Mar and Edmonds identify an important linkage here:

> Race and space, after all, have an over whelming and pervasive commonality- they each are conceived as natural, given and elemental (Mar and Edmonds 2010, p5).

Recent post-colonial scholarship has problemitized the assumption of the natural and given character of race whilst similarly, critical geographers have also challenged the

same assumption on space.[20] These bodies of work suggest that both race and space are not natural and rather they are used as tools to maintain un-even power relations. Indeed "…racial segregation, by its very nature is a spatial practice" (Byrne 2010, p.103). Segregation allows for the maintenance of a hierarchal structure. Resources and services can be a distributed with ease if neighbourhoods are divided upon lines of 'race'. Similarly it allows the dominating group to exercise control and constraint. In Israel, segregation is practiced through a myriad of legislation but is also accepted as a social hegemonic notion even among more liberal circles, justified with statements such as; "they prefer to stick to their own".

Settler colonialism is thus about unmaking Indigenous space through a variety of mechanisms. In the city, traditionally the centre from which inclusive and participatory citizenship emanates from, this is exemplified by the attempt to erase the memory of the Indigenous urban society as well as erasing the space for memories to be shared, commemorated and developed.

3. The urban landscape of Historic Palestine

There has been a significant amount of Palestinian scholarly interest in urban life before the Nakba, with a particular effort to point to the modernity and cosmopolitanism of Palestine prior to Israel's establishment. For a long time the focus was on the urban elites and the intelligentsia in an understandably defensive measure to prove existence of Palestinian society. Others, like Doumani, have made significant contributions to the understanding of the non-elites such as merchants and peasants.

[20] See David Harvey and the International Critical Geography Group.

This more holistic approach to Palestinian history is important as it sheds light on the spaces from which contemporary Palestinian identity emerged (Khalidi 1997). My aim here is not to give a thorough historical overview of Palestine during the Ottoman and British Mandate period. Rather I will briefly summarise the urban space of Historic Palestine in the early 20th century and the decades prior to the Nakba, a period which takes precedence in Palestinian collective memory to demonstrate the importance of Haifa in the Palestinian narrative.

In the early 20th century, Palestine was prospering in both the spheres of agriculture and trade whilst also enjoying a vibrant cultural scene. This was mainly due to its cities and in particular those situated on the coast. As with most other societies, the smaller towns and villages around these urban centres heavily relied upon them for employment and services. Urban life in Palestine was certainly not homogenous and there were distinct characteristics to the various urban centres. Whilst the coastal cities shared some characteristics, those inland such as Nablus had distinct differences and Jerusalem, of course, was vastly different to all of them because of its religious heritage. Jaffa and its surroundings was a citrus producing region and exported the fruits to the surrounding region and Europe through its busy port. Most of Palestine's publishing and press houses were located in Jaffa and it also enjoyed a lively cultural scene. During an interview with Nizar, a second generation Palestinian NGO worker living in Haifa, this was corroborated when she recalled what she knew of Jaffa before the Nakba:

> There was a strong cultural life in Jaffa, I read there was a tango salon and people would go dance tango (Nizar 2015).

This recollection of tango in Jaffa, mirrors that of the bikinis on the beach in Haifa. Both of which are implied to be alien to Palestine, and thus markers of progress and modernization. Modernization seems to be recurrent theme in 'proving' urban existence in Palestine before the Nakba. Jaffa with its various 'modern' features is often regarded as the pride and joy of Palestine's pre-1948 urban landscape and acquired the title of the "bride of Palestine". Before its disintegration, Palestine was undergoing various economic and social changes common to other areas in the region. In the 1930s new urban elites were emerging in Palestine's coastal cities as a result of the import-export trade with the European Capitalist market (Tamari 2009, p.9). Among this coastal bourgeoisie was also a growing and vibrant "urban entrepreneurial class" with regional and European links. Writing on Palestine's conflictual modernity, Salim Tamari argues the following:

> The unfulfilled modernity of Palestine is seen here as the product of the disintegration of pre 1948 society, the result of war and displacement rather than a result of underdevelopment. In this regard, Palestine's modern history diverges from that of the rest of the Arab East, Turkey, and Iran (Tamari 2009, p.3-4).

In contrast to the Palestinian urban cities, Tel Aviv became the epitome of Zionist imagination as the first modern Jewish city to be built in Palestine. The Balfour Declaration in 1917 was a catalyst for this increasing ethnoterritorial rhetoric, indeed the document's dualistic categorization of people in Palestine as Jews and non-Jews laid the foundation for Israel's ethnic binary. Drawing upon De Certeau, Rabinowitz and Monterescu explain that this period saw "explicit and conscious remodelling of urban space as nationalised place" (Rabinowitz and Monterescu 2008, p.205). They use the case of Jaffa to illustrate this, describing relations between Jaffa and Tel Aviv as a child-parent relationship. Indeed Tel Aviv began as a suburb of Jaffa, but

mushroomed and began to overtake Jaffa both economically and demographically (Rabinowitz and Monterescu 2008, p.206). In 1948, Tel Aviv committed matricide and Jaffa was depopulated of its Palestinian inhabitants. A few years later Jaffa would be incorporated into the Tel Aviv municipality and since then the two cities have been referred to in official Israeli documents as Tel Aviv-Yafo.

The adjacent cities of Lydda and Ramleh, situated on the edge of the coastal plain, were also major urban centres in Palestine. After occupying the cities in 1917, the British built an international airport and a main train station in Lydda and developed the urban infrastructure in both. Strategically these cities were important as they sat on a junction between Jaffa in the West and Jerusalem in the East (Yiftachel and Yacobi 2003, p.680). Jerusalem was obviously important for religious reasons, but it was also home to elite Palestinian families. In the north, aside from Haifa which will be discussed in depth shortly, Acca and Nazareth were the other two main Palestinian cities. Acca was similar to Haifa and functioned as an important port city. Nazareth is the anomaly in the story of Palestinian cities in the 1948 Territory. As a result of interference from Western Churches it was neither destroyed, nor were its residents forcibly cleansed in 1948. Although spared from destruction and displacement, the Nakba did of course affect the city. In addition to having its wider society obliterated, Nazareth would go on to suffer the consequences of the continuous Nakba. The state confiscated much of its land and limited its growth by refusing building permits. The main institutions were relocated to the new Jewish Israeli neighbourhood built above old Nazareth, Nazereth Illit (King-Irani 2007).

Haifa, located on the northern coast of the 1948 Territory, began to seriously develop under the rule of the Ottoman governor Dahir al Umar in the late 18th century. From 1919-1939, under the British Mandate, it quadrupled in size to over 100,000 residents

and became one of Palestine's major cities. It was during the Mandate that the term "mixed cities" was first used in official documents and simply denoted an urban area in which both Arabs and Jews lived (Goren 2004, p.101).

During this period the Jewish community went from being an eighth of the population to over half by 1939. This drastic increase was a result of several immigration waves from Europe with many of the new Jewish settlers choosing to live in urban centers (Seikaly 2001, p.47). In '*Haifa Before and After 1948'* Mahmoud Yazbak and Yfaat Weiss argue that throughout much of the British Mandate period the cultural and leisure sphere's of Arabs and Jews quite often overlapped, suggesting a degree of shared life particularly for the middle and upper classes (Yazbak and Weiss 2011, p.97). In the economic and industrial spheres of life, Arabs and Jews kept much more separate. The Labor Zionist Movement, the Histadrut, was consistently pushing for economic separatism which would see a totally self-reliant Jewish workforce excluding all forms of Arab labor. Zachary Lockman explains that this would help shape "many of the social, economic, political, and cultural institutions and patterns that would later come to be seen as unique to Yishuv and later Israeli society" (Lockman 1996, p.34). This overlapping life would come to an abrupt halt in 1948 following the fall of Haifa to Zionist forces and the city's de-Arabization.

In the decades leading up to 1948, Haifa shared many characteristics with other Arab cities at the time. There were burgeoning industries and a busy port. Haifa was also a cultural hub and was home to many cinemas and theatres. Just as the other major cities in Palestine, Haifa was a key part or the urban cosmopolitan landscape of Palestine. Johnny, a second generation activist in Haifa, described what he knew of Palestinian Haifa;

> Haifa had an advanced cultural scene, including a rich press, theatres, film screenings, the opera, lectures, community associations. Haifa was the source of living for many, and they in turn contributed to building it on many levels (Johnny 2016).

From Johnny's account of Haifa as a cosmopolitan cultural hub with theatres and cinemas we can understand the importance of the de-Arabization of Haifa as part of the wider Zionist plan to 'urbicide' Palestine. Palestinian society would thus be crushed through the elimination of its political and intellectual elites. In April 1948, the Haganah (the Jewish paramilitary organization) colluded with the British Mandate authorities in a series of meetings in order to gain control over the city. The military operation coincided with the date of Passover and was thus called 'Operation Chametz', the Hebrew word for leaven referring to God's command to the Israelites as they fled Egypt to cleanse all the leaven from the houses and only eat unleaven bread (Khalidi 2008, p.32). Haifa itself was indeed cleansed of its Arab population, and by early 1948 the city's urban elite had collapsed following an extensive shelling campaign by the Zionist forces. Haifa, as the main port in Palestine, was also the final stop for the withdrawing British troops.

In the previously mentioned meetings between the Haganah and the British, an agreement was reached to allow for the smooth withdrawing of the troops through the port. In return rather than enforce law and order as they were legally obliged under the terms of the Mandate, the British troops simply removed the buffer zone between the Zionist forces and Palestinians prompting the final cleansing of the city (Pappe 2006, p.92-94). The de-Arabization that happened in Haifa was consistent with what was happening around the country at the time- the elimination of the native indigenous Palestinian population. However Dan Rabinowitz explains that this

process in the urban areas, was unlike that of the rural areas, because it was done "in full view" of a civilian Jewish audience. Of Haifa, Rabinowitz writes that:

> Prior to the war Palestinians had been socially relevant for Jews in a variety of ways: they were neighbors, business partners, vendors, customers, clients, service providers, sometimes friends. Their Jewish counterparts were at hand to witness their departure or, minimally, notice and register their absence once they had gone (Rabinowitz 2007, p.52).

Following the expulsion of most of the city's Arabs, those few thousand remaining were ordered by the new Zionist leadership to move to the poor neighborhood of Wadi Nisnas, essentially ghettoizing them. They were given just a few days to move and even had to pay for their own enforced removal (Pappe 2011, p.23). Over subsequent years, many of the Palestinians in the rural areas who survived the ethnic cleansing but whose villages and towns had been in destroyed in the Galilee would move to Haifa. Rather traumatically these Palestinians would have to rent houses from the state that were previously owned by Palestinians who had been expelled. Following the Nakba, although having been granted citizenship, the Palestinian community across the new Jewish state were placed under military rule for nearly two decades, with its manifestations far more restrictive than what is seen in the West Bank today.

The trauma of the ethnic cleansing of Haifa lives on in not only the first-generation survivors, but also in those who have come to live in Haifa. Nizar, recalled to me what she knew of city during the Nakba:

> During the 1948 war in Haifa there was a plan between the Zionists and the colonialists to force the Palestinians to leave. The old men and women in Haifa said they heard them saying 'to the port, to the port, to the port' (in English). Because Haifa is built on a mountain they called to the people 'to the port to the port', all the

> Palestinians went down to the port and there were ships. There were ships ready for the Palestinians. They put them on the ships which went to Lebanon and Syria and the people on the ships never returned. I sat with an old lady and she told me that the phrase 'to the port, to the port' is still in their minds, they can still hear it. She also thought that something was waiting for them there (Nizar 2015).

This haunting repetitive echo of "to the port, to the port" characterises not only the collective memory of Haifa during its fall to the Zionist forces but also memories across Palestine. The repetition and reverberation of stories from the Nakba emphasises the shared impact of the tragedy. Nizar's recollection of a story told to her by a first-generation Nakba survivor includes the use of collective pronouns; "still in *their* minds, *they* can still hear it." This also emphasises the how individual experiences feed into the collective landscape (Jayyusi 2007, p.110).

In most of these cities, much of the urban infrastructure was physically destroyed and the new Jewish State would build new infrastructure on top of the ruins. In other cases they simply moved the new Jewish immigrants into the old Palestinian Arab buildings. Observant travellers to Palestine/Israel can still see typical Islamic and Arab architecture, which in many cases has succumb to European gentrification. For example in Jaffa the old town houses jewellery and art boutiques, whilst in Jerusalem the Arab villas of the Western neighbourhoods such as Qatamon and Baqa are sought after my upper middle class Jewish Israelis. In Haifa on the other hand, the old neighbourhood of Wadi Al Salib is decaying and facing demolition threats from the municipality. Memories of Palestinian urban life is something that Israel wants to occlude from the hegemonic historical narrative. This is done either through simple destruction (as is being attempted in Wadi Al Salib), or through appropriation of the remnants and the altering of the historic narrative. In contrast, the narrative of the

simple peasant life of the villages is considered to be not as much as a threat to them as the life of the cities. Israel wants to homogenise the Indigenous Palestinian, the image of the rural village thus becomes a useful instrument to paint a picture of the backwards and feudal Arab.

The presence of an urban and modern pre-Israel city also does not fit Zionism's narrative of a "People without a land for a land without a people". *Terra nullius* was used world over by colonialist and settler colonialist alike to lay claim to land that was deemed empty. Thus the destruction of Palestine's urban life both physically and from the historical record was crucial to supporting this Zionist myth. Most Palestinians now, do not have a living memory of these cities. In day to day life, they rely on inherited memories and collective narratives in order to recreate this lost urban landscape, of which Haifa was an integral part.

4. Mixed and Segregated

Nearly seventy years later, notwithstanding some advancement in the standards of living, Palestinian citizens continue to live separate and unequal lives to that of their Jewish counterparts. When Palestinians and Israeli Jews meet, it is usually either at university or in the workplace and in both these occasions Palestinians face serious obstacles and barriers that Israeli Jews do not. Johnny explains the following:

> The points of interaction are in the economic sector only. And even in this sector there is dominance and control by the Jewish population. And of course the Jewish population also controls and dominates the life resources of the Arabs (Johnny 2016).

It is important to remember that these points of interaction Johnny mentions are limited and the settler-Indigenous power structures remain in play. This is the case throughout all of Israel where the geopolitical and social reality is of exclusion and marginalisation of the Palestinian citizens. Their citizenship is premised on their forgetting of their Indigeneity and to accept in return a watered-down form of citizenship. In Haifa, this nominal citizenship is hidden in the discourse of a tolerant and diverse “mixed city”.

The “mixed city” was first used by the British Mandatory administration to describe locales with a mixed Arab and Jewish population. Now in a similar fashion the Israeli government uses it simply to describe a city where both Arabs and Jews live under the same municipal jurisdiction. Haifa is one of five “mixed cities” in Israel, including Acca, Jaffa, Ramla and Lod. Despite it inclusive implications, the reality is very different and the ‘mixed city’ discourse is one which dismisses the importance of history in such a segregated urban community. Ghazi Falah perhaps most accurately summarizes the situation in these ‘mixed cities’ as “living together apart” (Falah 1996). The term “mixed city”, although indicative of its demographic make-up of more than one ethnic community is misleading. Certainly the “mixed cities” are home to both Palestinian Israelis and Jewish Israelis, in Haifa the population of Arabs stands at 10 per cent, a little further north in Acca it stands at 30 per cent. However, in all of these cities, Arabs and Jews live in separate neighborhoods with only a few neighbourhoods in all of them where Arabs and Jews live side by side. Yacobi explains that the term “mixed city…raises images of mutual membership while ignoring questions of power, control and resistance” (Yacobi 2009, p.1). It ignores that Palestinian Arabs remain not only a small minority, but that they are also excluded from much of Israeli society and are effectively citizens without citizenship.

Shourideh Molavi has described this exclusion from a legal perspective with her "exclusion by inclusion" framework (Molavi 2013). Molavi argues that:

> It is through the bestowal of Israeli citizenship that Arabs are deemed stateless; it is through inclusion within the Israeli citizenship regime that they are excluded. Here the modern paradigm of citizenship, traditionally a mechanism for inclusion is reversed… (Molavi 2013, p.214).

The Haifa based Palestinian legal advocacy NGO Adalah has extensively documented this institutionalized exclusion described by Molavi and in 2011 released a thorough inequality report (Adalah 2011). This citizenship disparity between settler and Indigenous is further evident in the physical segregation in the ground in the mixed cities. Falah affirms that the major factor in segregation patterns in Israel's mixed cities is the ideologically driven desire to retain a spatial Jewish hegemony rather than a natural occurrence of self-segregation in which communities choose to live 'amongst their own'. The spatial dynamics of segregation are important because they often have serious policy implications on services provided by the state. (Falah 1996, p.823-824). In this way, the state can neglect Arab areas without affecting Jewish residents. The segregation of the schooling system also allows them to direct more resources to Jewish schools as well as manipulating the curriculum, demonstrating that urban planning is an effective method of control.

Indeed these urban planning policies are part of the larger project of Judaization of space which accelerated following the establishment of Israel. Following the fall of Haifa, those Palestinians that remained were forcibly concentrated in Wadi Nisnas, which effectively became a ghetto until 1954 (Falah 1996, p.837). Meanwhile, Jewish neighbourhoods were planned and built to meet the growing demands of the new

Jewish immigrants. After 1954, Palestinians were restricted to living in old Arab neighbourhoods with no prospects for urban development or expansion. Typically, urban planning is done in the name of modernization and with a purpose to achieve commonly accepted social goals. However in divided societies, such as settler-colonial ones, governments often use urban planning as a tool to control ethnic minorities who may pose as a serious challenge to the state (Yiftachel 1995, p.125).

In Israel, urban planning and Judaization of space is done in the name of maintaining dominance of the Jewish character of the state and supporting the Zionist narrative. The National Master Plan of Israel, formulated according to the 1965 Planning and Building Law states the following as its main aims:

> To develop spaces in Israel in a way which allows the realization of the goals of Israeli society and its varied components, the realization of its Jewish character, the absorption of Jewish immigrants and maintaining its democratic character (Fenster 2004, p.408).

This Jewish character is realized in both the demographic majority across the country, but also in the built Jewish landscape which serves to support Jewish Israeli collective narrative and identity. Jewish Israeli spatial hegemony was achieved firstly by force in 1948 with the ethnic cleansing of over 400 Palestinian villages and then later it was codified into the Israeli legal system through various mechanisms including the Orwellian 'present absentee' status to appropriate land from internally displaced Palestinians. This Judaization of space, or rather de-Palestinization of the landscape, has been identified by Falah as a "strategy of de-signification". Falah states that "by removing the past cultural traces of other peoples from the landscape, undercut and weakened Palestinian claims to this territory, i.e., a strategy of de-signification." (Falah 1996, p.257). As Falah indicates, the Judaization of space was carried out not

only to change the physical landscape, but also to change the cognitive landscape of memories where Palestine was being kept alive.

This policy of segregation and exclusion of Palestinian citizens is particularly obvious in “mixed cities” where the coexistence of Jews and Arabs shows the inequalities side by side. Palestinians in the mixed cities are doubly marginalized as members of both a municipal minority and a national one (Monterscue 2003, p.128). In Haifa, urban planning is used to assert the dominance of the Jewish community, with most of Haifa’s Israeli Jew’s living on the more desirable slopes of the mountain whilst most of the Arab neighbourhoods are down near the port including Wadi Al Salib, Abbas and Wadi Nisnas. So, although Haifa remains ‘mixed’ in terms of the presence of both a Palestinian Arab community and an Israeli Jewish community, they remain very much socially and politically separate. In conversation with Johnny, he explained this separateness:

> Haifa is one city this is true, but two people live in it or rather two categories of residents. Each category lives in its own separate space from each other. It is a city separated along ethnic/ nationalist lines and this can been seen from the residential neighbourhoods and also with the lack of initiative from the local authorities and government administrations in issuing permits for Palestinian residential buildings. Or in establishing joint neighbourhoods for the two groups of residents. The points of cooperation are in the economic sector only. And even this sector there is dominance and control by the Jewish population. And of course the Jewish population also controls and dominates the life resources of the Arabs *(*Johnny 2016).

He refers to two categories of residents which becomes very visually obvious in ‘mixed cities’ such as Haifa. This binary categorisation of Jews and non- Jews is legislatively institutionalised in Israel. It is visible in the services present in Arab

neighbourhoods and in the domination of what Johnny refers to as “life resources”.

Haifa today is no longer a Palestinian city, indeed the Palestinian city of Haifa was destroyed in 1948 in all its physical and social forms. In its place, and in some places literally on top of the ruins of Palestinian Haifa, sits the new Israeli Haifa with its European style buildings and heavily industrialised port. However despite the destruction of Palestinian Haifa and the segregated and marginalised lived reality, what was evident from fieldwork is that many of the Arab residents in the city are living a Palestinian life. What I mean here is that they identify themselves, their social practices and their spaces as Arab Palestinian. This Palestinian-ness is being articulated in Haifa in a variety of ways and as a result some kind of independent (albeit limited) life is being lived.

5. Palestinian space

This life that is being lived in Haifa is within distinctly Palestinian space. Contrary to the Palestinian rural villages and towns which sit on the periphery of Israeli society, the mixed cities like Haifa, give Palestinians more access to social and economic opportunities that are not available in more rural and seriously neglected Arab municipalities. This is evident in the burgeoning Palestinian civil society which has exploded in recent decades. Where before Nazareth was the urban center of the north, Haifa has now take over and is the de facto political and cultural center for Palestinians inside the 1948 Territory. Home to much of Palestinian 48 civil society including many non-governmental organisations, the city is meeting the cultural, political and social needs of this community. Often, this very presence of Arab civil

society organisations is used as a defense against criticisms of undemocratic and ethnocratic practices and policies by the government. However, this civil society has emerged both separate and unequal to that of its Jewish counter-part, problematizing the modern concept of civil society which champions institutional pluralism to counter balance the state (Gellner 1994, p.5). For the Palestinians within the 1948 Territory, civil society is vital where political parties have largely failed to meet their cultural, political and social needs.

Initially, Palestinian civil society developed to make up for the poor services provided by the state to its Arab citizens, akin to black civil society in Apartheid South Africa which delivered services to the black population neglected by the regime. In the 1980s South Africa, civil society soon became a social space in which people were politicized and community affairs were dealt with (Payes 2005, p.41). A similar shift has occurred in Israel during the last few decades with Palestinian NGO's providing politicized spaces in which Palestinians can express their Palestinian identity through the production and re-production of their narrative. Indeed the number of Palestinian NGOs in Israel has increased substantially since the 1980s with many civil society organisations focusing on advocacy and civil rights and a some focusing on Arab identity preservation. These Palestinian civil society organisations developed and continue to develop in a context of serious marginalization, exclusion and even intimidation from the state, having never enjoyed the same protection and privileges granted to their Jewish counterparts.

The failure of Palestinian political parties to have an impact on the decision making process within the Knesset or to represent the needs of the Palestinian community in the 1948 Territory has further elevated the importance of civil society. Jamal argues that "by providing the Arab Society (in Israel) with tools to face state institutions, Arab

NGO's are playing a very important counter-hegemonic role" (Jamal 2008, p.303). This counter-hegemonic role has included the creation of a 'grey space', in which organisations balance between legality and illegality, hegemonic discourse and counter hegemonic discourse. Yiftachel developed the concept of 'grey space' to analyze the struggle of the Arab Bedouin in the Beersheba metropolitan area. Yiftachel explains that this concept of 'grey space' refers to both physical spaces and abstract ones:

> The concept of 'grey space' refers to developments, enclaves, populations and transactions positioned between the 'lightness' of legality/approval/safety and the 'darkness' of eviction/destruction/death. Grey spaces are neither integrated nor eliminated, forming pseudo-permanent margins of today's urban regions, which exist partially outside the gaze of state authorities and city plans. The identification of 'grey spacing' as a ceaseless process of 'producing' social relations, bypasses the false modernist dichotomy between 'legal' and 'criminal', 'oppressed' and 'subordinated', 'fixed' and 'temporary' (Yiftachel 2009, p.250).

Whilst bypassing certain barriers in this space, the Palestinian community in the 1948 Territory is still limited in all spheres of political, social and economic life because of the very nature of Zionism as an exclusively Jewish project. Indeed one way in which the state is able to limit Palestinian NGOs is through draconian laws such as the "Foreign Government Funding Law" and the colloquially known "Nakba Law". The former one demands a declaration in all public forums if an organisation receives more than half its funding from foreign donors, with opponents declaring it an intimidation tactic. The latter threatens to withdraw any state funding from an organisation that commemorates the Nakba in any way. These laws were of concern

to many I spoke to working for NGOs in Haifa, including those in Baladna and the Arab Cultural Association who engage in various oral history and memory projects.

I would, however, go further than Yiftachel's concept of "grey space" and argue that many of these spaces are spaces of resistance where Palestinian-ness is being articulated through a memory based politics. This memory based politics, emphasizes that simple "remembering" of Palestinian society and the recreation of Palestinian space based on this memory is a deeply political act. Indeed, as Maryam said to me, in the face of a colonial project that wants to replace: "the simplest thing a person can do is remember" (Maryam 2015).

One of the most important spaces in Haifa for the reproduction of Palestinian-ness and memory of pre 1948 Palestine is the neighbourhood of Wadi Nisnas where me and Ayed walked after our interview. Nestled less than half a kilometer inland from the present day port, Wadi Nisnas was the neighbourhood where the Palestinians who had survived the fall of Haifa were ghettoized. It has now become the center of Palestinian Arab life in Haifa with shops, bars, cafes and various cultural institutions serving the needs of the city's Arab residents. Wadi Nisnas still has many old Arab buildings and the narrow alley ways give it the village-like feel Ayed mentioned. Nearly all the residents of Wadi Nisnas are Palestinians, as such the neigbourhood is neglected by the municipality. Yet whilst it is neglected, Wadi Nisnas is used by the municipality as an open-air exhibition of Arab culture to promote its diversity and its uniqueness in an otherwise conflicted country.

Figure 5.

This is epitomized in the “Eid al Ayad” festival, meaning holiday of holidays, it began in 1993 when Chanukah, Christmas and Ramadan all collided in December of that year. The Arab-Jewish Center ‘Beit Hagafen’, with the support of the local municipality, decided to organize a festival celebrating Jewish, Muslim and Christian traditions but also including the Bahai, Druze and Ahmadi traditions. The festival takes place in Wadi Nisnas, the roads are closed off and the neighbourhood is flooded with mostly Israeli Jews from other parts of the city. The Executive Director of Beit

Hagefen said the following in a promotional video on the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs website:

> The city of Haifa is known as a very tolerant city. We have ten per cent Arabs in our city, half of them Muslims and half of them Christians…the idea of living together is very strong here…the purpose (of the festival) is to bring together cultures and people from all over the city to meet each other. Because culture and art is the best provide to get people to know each other (Ron 2017).

In this statement the director makes a contradiction that the "idea of living together is very strong" in the city and yet the festival is designed to bring people together so that they can "meet each other". He thus, whether consciously or not, implies that although Arabs and Jews live in the same city, it is not "together" and they do not interact. Johnny, who lives in Wadi Nisnas, has a more negative perspective of Eid al Ayad:

> Since the establishment of the project of Eid al Ayad, a large portion of Palestinians rejected this idea. Eid Al Ayad is a form of cultural, intellectual occupation on residents from above. Its part of a superstructure to humiliate Palestinians and all of it is under the banner of coexistence. But it is not coexistence (Johnny 2016).

For Johnny, Eid al Ayad is a mockery of the reality on the ground where Palestinians and Israeli Jews exist in the same space but do not "coexist". In a similar anesthetization of Wadi Nisnas, the Haifa tourist board writes on its website that it is;

> a picturesque neighborhood, with old stone buildings and passageways that give a rural country feeling within the city. In the heart of the neighborhood lies an oriental marketplace (shuk) that is typically colorful with smells and sights that create an atmosphere of ethnic and religious co-existence (Visit Haifa 2016).

Interestingly, in this case both Palestinians and Israelis have noted the rural atmosphere of this neighbourhood. However, for Palestinians Wadi Nisnas serves as a reminder of what was lost and had to be recreated. For the tourist board, it serves to put forward this narrative of co-existence. Indeed the description omits the fact that all the residents are Arab, let alone Palestinians.

Wassim, a third-generation resident of Haifa from the Galilee, explained to me what coexistence looks like for Palestinians:

> I remember when we were children we used to play with our Jewish neighbours until the age of 8 or 9 and then everything started to change. They started to call us dirty Arab's or whenever something happened other names. Later on we have a separate education system so you are mostly in an Arab atmosphere. Only when you really have to go to basic services you get in contact (Wassim 2014).

The "basic services" that Wassim refers to are things such as tax, health insurance, driving licences etc. which are hardly bench marks for mixing or coexistence. The segregation was also made distinctly clear to me in many situations during my time spent in the city. It particularly stood out when I would socialise with Palestinians in the evening and we would venture out to cafes and bars. These social spaces are often segregated and on many occasions when walking through the city I was told: "That's a Jewish place, there's an Arab place around the corner". It is clear that through this enforced separation, Palestinians are creating spaces for themselves.

Muna, a third-generation woman working for the Arab Cultural Association in Haifa but originally from the Galilee also affirmed this with her daily experience:

> I live in Haifa at the moment. I have spent the last twenty years here, studying and working... Over the last three years that I have lived and worked here I realised that I

> don't see Jews. It is a mixed city with ninety per cent Israeli Jews and only ten per cent Arab. But in my daily life I don't mix with Israeli Jews. I don't hear Hebrew. Now that I drive- when I used to take public transport I would hear it a little and I would sometimes speak Hebrew to the bus driver… but all my friends are Arab, my office is Arab, I only write in Arabic, I only speak in Arabic. I see Haifa is one hundred per cent Arab, that is my personal experience (Muna 2016).

Muna describes a life in which she does not mix with Israeli Jews despite the fact that they make up 90 per cent of the city. Her social and work life remain within Palestinian circles and as such she also does not have to speak Hebrew in her day to day life. She state's that because of this personal experience she sees Haifa as Arab.

Lying adjacent to Wadi Nisnas is Wadi Al Salib, a dilapidated Palestinian neighbourhood. As one drives into Haifa from the northern road, much of the neighbourhood is hidden from view by a flyover. After 1948, Wadi Salib was populated with Mizrahi Jews and in 1959 was the site of a sizeable uprising against the discriminatory treatment they received from the state. Wadi Al Salib is slowly being populated by more Palestinians and a few of the old buildings are being turned into bars and cultural organisations. Of particular note is the Khashabi theatre in the Wadi Salib neighbourhood, which describes itself as follows on its Facebook page:

> The Khashabi Theatre…(is) located in an old building in the historic Wadi Salib area of downtown Haifa, from which Palestinian residents were forcibly expelled in 1948 and which until today is the target of ongoing Judaization. By developing this space, where young Palestinian theatre professionals and artists are free to create, experiment and perform. Khashabi Theatre aims to generate a new artistic movement that can challenge existing norms, empower the local community, and preserve the elements of the Palestinian identity, such as language, place, and culture, through its

productions, performances, and workshops. The theatre will create a space where Palestinian artists can develop new, alternative forms of theatre and arts, challenging the cultural, social and artistic status quo, and where a novel artistic ideology can be born, based on the ideals of cooperation, experimentation and mutual support (Al Khashabi 2017).

The theatre's description of space is decidedly political and unapologetic. It acknowledges the historical narrative of the space in which it occupies, recognising the past trauma with today's reality of ongoing Judaization. It identifies the space as a safe one in which Palestinian artists can preserve and develop their identity. As an organisation that relies only independent funding, the Khashabi Theatre can bypass the limits imposed on institutions and NGOs which receive state funding.

Figure 6.

Nonetheless most of the buildings in this neighbourhood are completely run down and renovation has not been permitted by the municipality. Many of the buildings are

also facing demolition orders. Discussing this neighbourhood with Johnny and he reveals a more pessimistic analysis of the situation in Haifa:

> The new reality is a new city that has no connection with its Arab past. In other words its Arab past has been diminished in public spaces. The Palestinian presence has become a mere passing element without any effective influence. For example the number of old Arab buildings is gradually decreasing as a result of the slow and quiet destruction of the Arab neighbourhoods. Indeed now we are witnessing a systematic destruction of the Wadi Salib neighbourhood (Johnny 2016).

The memoricide of Haifa as once being a Palestinian Arab city, belonging to and connected to the wider Arab region, as described by Johnny, is manifested not only through the new built environment and the destruction of the Arab one, but also through the narrative of the mixed city. This narrative allows for the assumption that the Arab presence (both human and material) is simply part of the cultural mosaic of Israel.

During the same interview in Haifa with Muna I asked her about how she "sees" the Galilee. She explained:

> When I look north at the Galilee, yes there are hundreds of Jewish settlements spread out in every part of the Galilee… but a lot of the time I don't realise they are there, these Israeli places- the moshavs and kibbutzs. The geography of the Galilee is like two maps on top of each other, an Arab one and an Israeli one. I have never entered the Israeli one, I am not allowed to enter it and I don't know what is going on there (Muna 2016).

Muna's description of two separate maps on top of each other is a very visual representation of the landscape in the Galilee. It stands in contrast to the well-known

map used by scholars and activists of 'Vanishing Palestine', which shows four stages of Zionist land take over, with the final map showing only the West Bank Area A enclaves and the Gaza Strip. Although useful in showing the geopolitical factors on the ground, this map implies that Palestine has vanished. Muna's description however explains that this is not the case and that there is a living Palestinian map that lies beneath the Israeli one. Muna also implies that her exclusion from the Israeli map means that she does not see it or realise that it is there.

Similarly, Zein, a third-generation woman also working for the Arab Cultural Association in Haifa, explained to me that she also still sees Palestine:

> When I go to see my grandmother in Acca, when I walk with my cousins along the sea or in the old city…it's these kinds of things that make me feel a tie. No matter what the state claims and no matter however it identifies places….Nazareth is an Arab city, Acca is an Arab city, Haifa is an Arab city. What has happened here has been a really fucked up transformation, but I still see something left of Palestine (Zein 2015).

Zein's optimism reveals the way in which Palestine can still be seen in these grey spaces despite the "fucked up transformation". Poet Layla 'Allush in "The path of Affection" similarly reflects on how she still sees a Palestine that survived this imposition of a new state placed on top of it. With reference to Haifa she writes:

Along the amazing road drawn from the throat of recent dates…

Along the amazing road drawn from my old Jerusalem,

And despite the hybrd signs, shops and cemeteries,

My fragmented self drew together to meet the kin of New Haifa…

The earth remained unchanged as of old,

With all its mortgaged trees dotting the hills,

And all the green clouds and the plants

Fertilized with fresh fertilizers,

And efficient sprinklers…

In the earth there was an apology for my father's wounds,

And all along the bridges was my Arab countenance,

In the tall poplars,

In the trains and windows,

In the smoke rings.

Everything is Arab despite the change of tongue,

Despite the tricks, the cars and the car lights….

All the poplars and my ancestor's solemn orchards

Were, I swear, smiling at me with Arab affection.

Despite all that had been eliminated and coordinated and the "modern" sounds…

Despite the seas of light and technology…

O my grandparents, the rich soil was bright with Arab reserve,

And it sang out, believe me, with affection (Parmenter 1994, p.6).

For 'Allush the city remains "bright with Arab reserve" despite the modern and somewhat superficial changes. Palestine is therefore in existence, both in memory

but also in the present through the landscape and the people. Haifa is an important part of this existential Palestine, because as the political and cultural capital of the Palestinians in the 1948 Territory, it serves as the focal point of resistance to homogenisation and erasure.

6. Nostalgia in the city

The assertive Palestinian presence in Haifa reminds many what was lost with the Nakba in 1948 and it was here that I encountered nostalgic recollections of urban Palestine. As discussed in the previous chapter, nostalgia informs a huge part of individual and collective memory of Palestine before the Nakba. It can serve to preserve knowledge of the past in the face of furious attempts to negate it. For many Palestinians in the 1948 Territory, nostaligia is expressed in terms of isolation.

Palestine was naturally part of the wider regional Arab landscape, and it was the cities in particular that saw a fluid movement of people and goods between them. Many middle-class and upper class Palestinians studied in Beirut, or had businesses in Cairo and Damascus. Borders were fluid and families often travelled to see each other in different countries around the region. Indeed, the late Edward Said spent the early years of his life in between Cairo and Jerusalem, where his father although originally from the latter city had a business in the former. At the same time, other Arabs were also visiting and working in Palestine. A rather famous moment in Haifa's history during the Mandate period, something that was frequently repeated to me by Palestinians in the city, was that the famous Egyptian singer Um Kalthoum performed in the city. This was often articulated to me as a moment of pride, to show that Palestine was very much a part of the Arab region.

Today, many second and third generation Nakba survivors feel isolated from the Arab world and speaking about the connections between Palestine and other Arab countries before 1948 exemplifies this loss:

> We can't go to Lebanon, we can't go to Syria and many other Arab countries which makes this severance between us and them. Of course recently with all the media you feel closer but still it's not close enough. We have never really lived in a place with a fully Arab atmosphere… Before all this, Palestine was Arab (Wassim 2014).

Wassim's lamentation that he cannot visit most Arab countries[21] is a common complaint of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship. Many who do not have dual nationality are not able to travel to the Arab world because of the conflicting relations between Israel and her neighbours. In the 1950s and 1960s during the military rule period, the situation was incredibly isolating as they were also cut off from their brethren in the West Bank and Gaza. After 1967, the situation improved as the affective annexation of the West Bank, Gaza and Golan Heights meant that there was a sharing of Nakba memories and experiences across the Green Line. Another important aspect highlighted by Wassim is his longing for an Arab Palestine, which is particularly absent in the experience of a Palestinian citizen of Israel. In the 1948 Territory, not only has the Arab landscape been purposely altered[22], the Arab culture is also repressed institutionally. The education system in particular plays a huge role in this repression, with the curriculum in both Arab and Jewish schools emphasising only Jewish culture and values. Ismael Abu Saad explains that the reason for this is to "provide an alienating and substandard education for Indigenous people" which detaches them from their culture (Abu Saad 2006, p.1089). In addition, despite being

[21] Citizens of Israel are able to visit Egypt and Jordan following the peace agreements in 1977 and 1994.
[22] See Basem Ra'ad's *Hidden Histories: Palestine and the Eastern Mediterranean* (2010) for more on this altered landscape and suppression of the Palestinian narrative of the land.

an official language, Arabic is often relegated to third place in the aesthetic landscape (place signs and commercial signs etc.), as was highlighted in 'Allush's poem with the "hybrid signs" and "change of tongue" (Parmenter 1994,p .6)

Nostalgia among my interviewees was often expressed both spatially and temporally. The temporal nostalgia manifests itself as a longing for the past, or rather for a Palestine before the 1948 rupture. Spatial nostalgia was particularly noticeable in Haifa, where there was an expression of longing for the return to the rural. These two thematic expressions of nostalgia are not mutually exclusive and they constantly overlap in the collective memories and narrative of Palestinians. Indeed a return to pre-1948 Palestinian is also for many a return to the rural as Palestine was majority agrarian society. Palestinian lawyer and writer Raja Shehadeh writes of his nostalgia in his book '*Palestinian Walks: Notes on a vanishing landscape'* (2010). Shehadeh journeys through the hills of the West Bank and through anecdotal narratives traces the drastically changing political terrain of Palestine. One particular anecdote emphasizes particularly well the nostalgia for the rural life amidst the burgeoning urbanization. Abu Ameen, a man originally from the village of Harrasha, who due to his inability to sustain a totally agricultural lifestyle, had to move his family to Ramallah. He would spend six months in the city, and then return for the latter six months:

> He could hardly wait for the end of winter so he could be out again in the hills, sleeping on the roof of his qasr under the starry night sky, waking up in the morning with his clothes wet from dew (Shehadeh 2010, p.20).

Abu Ameen, now a part-time city dweller, longs for his days in the countryside away from Ramallah. This anecdote emphasizes the centrality of the rural in Palestinian

imagination despite the rapid urbanization. Additionally many symbols of Palestinian identity are deeply rooted in the rural, for example the olive tree which also symbolises *sumud* and the kuffiyeh scarf which was traditionally worn by the *fellaheen* in the fields before it was adopted into the Palestinian guerrilla uniform.[23]

In Haifa, many of the Palestinian residents are originally from the villages in the Galilee. Some of them are from destroyed villages and subsequently became residents of a shelter village, whilst others are from villages that survived the ethnic cleansing. It is thus unsurprising that many express rural nostalgia. Leaving the village life was either by force in 1948, or more recently because of the economic and spatial strangulation from encroaching Israeli towns.

Going back to the opening quotation of this chapter from an interview I conducted with Ayed, it is clear the nostalgia for Palestine before 1948 influences his imagination of what Palestine could be:

> So that's why I am asking myself the question what if Palestine had been able to develop until now. I think we had a golden age and those fucking bastards cut it. And now we have to rebuild it again (Ayed 2015).

Ayed's image of girls in bikinis on the beach in Haifa demonstrates how collective memory of urban life in Palestine is one of the cosmopolitan and modern. It is this image that Ayed refers to as a "golden age" which was subsequently cut in 1948. His rhetorical question of "what if Palestine had been able to develop" demonstrates not only a longing for a past long gone, but also an expression for an alternate reality.

[23] See Rashid Khalidi's *'Palestinian Identity'* (1997) for more on symbolic emblems of Palestinian identity.

Nizar also discussed a similar 'what if' scenario with me, in which the Nakba did not happen and Palestine continued along its path of "progression":

> When I became a student I began to hear a lot more about Palestine. I heard that the culture process in Palestine was very good in the 1930s and the 1940s…Sometimes I dream if there wasn't a Nakba and if Palestine would progress as an independent country. And I wonder how it would be (Nizar 2015).

These 'what if' scenarios came up frequently in my discussions with various people, drawing upon other Arab cities in which to imagine this alternate reality. Indeed before the Zionist occupation, Haifa was frequently compared to Beirut with the two coastal cities sharing many things during the 20s and 30s. The afore mentioned cultural and economic links between Palestine's coastal cities and that of neighbouring Lebanon also created cognitive links and references. Thus Beirut is present in many of the inherited memories from the first generation of Nakba survivors, by way of either having been there or knowing someone that had.

My personal knowledge of Beirut was informed by stories that my grandmother told me from the time when she worked on Hamra Street in Beirut, as a seamstress in the 1940s. She worked there until the Nakba and would later be reunited with her family in Palestine through the Red Cross. Her stories were usually of how wonderful and cosmopolitan Beirut was. Through her memories, Hamra Street in my imagination was a Champs-Élysées style avenue and this image was no doubt influenced by the common saying that "Beirut is the Paris of the Middle East". When I discussed this with people during my fieldwork, they had similar images of Beirut. These images, influenced by memories from their parents and grandparents, continue to live on in their imaginations because many cannot travel to Lebanon with their Israeli passports and see the city for themselves. Interestingly, a few of those I spoke to who did travel

to Beirut (on European or American passports) spoke of their disappointment in Hamra Street, because in reality it is a bit shabby and does not live up to what they had imagined. But for the many who cannot visit Beirut, the memory of this Arab city continues to live on and influences the nostalgia for what Haifa was and what it could have been. The nostalgia for Beirut demonstrates a wider longing to go back to a time when Palestine had not been severed from the Arab world. In this way, nostalgia serves as a tool to navigate spatiotemporal contradictions that arise from living in a space that was once called Palestine and is now called Israel.

Nostalgia in Haifa was also present in the coexistence narrative of he “mixed city”. This is a historical narrative that goes further than Yazbak and Weiss’s afore mentioned thesis of overlapping spheres of shared life. This narrative suggests that the Arabs and Jews in Haifa for many years before 1948 lived in peaceful coexistence, and continue to do so today. The continuity of this shared existence is put forward by many Zionist and Israeli academics. Historians such as Efram Karsh and Benny Morris claim that the relationship between the two communities was so strong that in 1948 the Jewish community beseeched the Arabs to stay (Karsh 2001). Karsh documents a meeting in which the Mayor of Haifa in 1948, Shabtai Levy, and the Hagana Chief Liaison Officer who made impassioned pleas for the Arabs of Haifa to stay (Karsh 2001, p.50). On the municipal website, the Mayor, Yona Yahav, also reiterates this notion of a continuous and peaceful coexistence. In a statement he declares:

> Haifa is a city where there are no slogans, but rather, a reality. It is a city where, for over 100 years, a tradition of co-existence exists for all its ethnic and religious groups. Haifa is an integrated city in every way, where veteran citizens live alongside newcomers, religious aside secular, and Jews alongside Arabs. It is a city whose

> citizens have created a solid base of tolerance, dual commitment and combined goals. Haifa has undergone a revolutionary transformation from a sleepy city of workers, whose main income was based in harbour services, heavy metal industries, oil and petro-chemical refineries, to evolve as a central, metropolitan city; urbanely new and modern, providing services to all the peripheral cities with a very wide variety of aspects (Haifa Municipal Website 2016).

Whilst emphasizing a continuity of historical coexistence and tolerance over "100 years", Yahav manages to ignore the catastrophic events of 1948 and the loss of the majority of Haifa's indigenous Arab population. Reflective of a broader liberal Zionist consensus, this narrative negates Palestinian memories of trauma and loss by simply denying the Nakba. The narrative of a continuous historical coexistence is also embodied in the character of Hasan Bey Shukri, dubbed as the first modern mayor of Haifa. Shukri, a Palestinian, held the office of mayor from 1927-1940 and was commended as one of the first key leaders in coexistence between Jews and Arabs. Upon his election to office, he appointed Jews in various municipal positions and began to introduce Hebrew into official documents (Goren 2006, p.24). He survived several assassination attempts undoubtedly because of his involvement in leading the Zionist inspired Muslim National Association. Shukri is often cited by Yahav, who has been known to say on more than one occasion that *"*only in Haifa is city hall on Hasan Shukri Street, while the largest Catholic Church in the city is on Tzionut (Zionism) Street*"* (Haaretz 2010). However, what Yahav doesn't mention is that these streets were subjected to an extensive renaming programme by the Zionist project. This transformation of the urban landscape was key to the Zionist project which sought to homogenise Palestinians as an inconsequential and backward rural group. Maintenance of the co-existence or mixed city narrative articulated by Yahav and

others is an attempt to distance the “scene” from the reality of the past events. Zreik explains this with specificity to Haifa:

> Sometimes the past and what has remained to tell about its scene constitute a heavy burden and memory constitutes an obstacle in the way of dealing with the living reality and its suppression becomes the best way to enable people to coexist with the present scene (Zreik 2007, p.210-211).

In this way, nostalgic recollections of coexistence are harnessed to suppress the reality of an ethnically cleansed Haifa and the remnants of a segregated Indigenous population who live in a state of total marginalisation.

7. Conclusion

Palestinian memories are influenced by the spaces in which they live and this is no exception in Haifa. What is remarkable in Haifa is the assertive nature of both Palestinian-ness and its politicization of memory that is emanating from spaces of urban segregation. This chapter has demonstrated the importance of Haifa among the Palestinian community in the 1948 Territory as not only a current political and cultural focal point but also a focal point in their historical narrative. This is a historical narrative that remembers Haifa as part of a thriving Palestinian urban fabric that was connected to the wider Arab region. They existed as a society, not just a random collection of hegemonic “Arab villages”. This memory of Palestinian Haifa in turn is encouraging the development of Palestinian space that defies the demands made of them by the settler colonial regime. It is a memory that appears to state: We were here, some of us are still here, and we plan on staying here.

As I have demonstrated throughout this thesis, the burgeoning Palestinian civil society in the 48 community is behind their growing assertiveness and much of this civil society is in Haifa. Whilst initially seeming to embrace all its residents under its "mixed city" label, Haifa is in reality a site of urban Judaization project which not only extends its reach to physical space, but also to cognitive spaces of memories and narratives. This link is stressed by Zreik who writes that "the question of your presence in history and the question of your presence in geography become one" (Zreik 2007, p.211). The historical 'whitewashing' is also reflected in memories of some Jewish residents who lived in Haifa before 1948. In his chapter entitled '*The Arabs just left; Othering and construction of self amongst Jews in Haifa before and after 1948'*, Dan Rabinowitz demonstrates the stark absence of the Nakba from memories of Jewish residents in Haifa. Through oral testimonies gathered from local Jewish residents before 1948, Rabinowitz notes that the two communities were indeed in close spatial proximity of each other with relationships ranging from the very familiar such as friends and colleagues to the less familiar such as peddlers and "Bedouins" (Rabinowitz 2007, p.56). However the events of 1948 and the flight of most of Haifa's Arabs was almost instantly erased from their memories and the collective consciousness, as if they simply disappeared (Rabinowitz 2007, p.51-52). The combination of this narrative of coexistence and the urban reality of segregation has left little room for anything other than a hegemonic Zionist discourse.

A Palestinian narrative however is emerging that reclaims Haifa as a Palestinian urban centre for cultural and knowledge production prior to its de-Arabisation in 1948. The fact that many of Haifa's Palestinian residents originate from the Galilee means that this assertive politicised memory is also being expressed in the north where the rural village landscape is facing a similar struggle against erasure. This struggle,

which is dominated by “return” activism in which oral history plays a central role, will be explored in the following chapter. Here I will end on a quotation taken from Ghassan Kanafani’s novella ‘*Return to Haifa*’ which demonstrates elegiacally the intrinsic link between physical landscapes and memories. Kanafani writes of his protagonist’s, Said, return to Haifa. In a somewhat Proustian fashion, Said’s memories are awakened almost involuntarily by his physical return to a city from which he was expelled decades before:

> When he reached the edge of Haifa…the memory did not return to him little by little. Instead, it rained down inside his head the way a stone wall collapses, the stones pilling up one upon another. The incidents and events came to him suddenly and began to pile up and fill his entire being (Kanafani 1984, p.99).

Kanafani’s description of Said’s return to Haifa suggests how the very place where Palestine is being erased, can also be the place where it is remembered, revived and recreated.

Chapter Five

Oral history and Return Activism: The Galilean Village Landscape

Figure 7.

1. Introduction

I arrived in Iqrit in the late morning for an event in memory of Land Day. The event promised activities that would involve tidying up the area around the church and cemetery and clearing some of the dry grass from the land. Their Facebook page indicated that hundreds of people would be attending. As I drove up the steep track to the village mound, I noticed that our car was the first to arrive, despite the fact that we were late. Jeries, one of the leaders of the activist group, and one of two people who were maintaining presence in the village that week came out to greet us. He informed me that the event had been cancelled because it was too windy. Shortly

after making some tea, the police had arrived. They hung around for five minutes or so, and after realizing no activities were happening, they left. It seems that everyone but the police and I had been informed about the event cancellation.

My experience described above took place on the land of Iqrit, a village located in the upper Galilee, north east of Acca. It not only demonstrates the trials and tribulations of observational field work, but also the importance to which the Israeli state attributes to interrupting Palestinian activities on sites of destruction such as that of Iqrit. These sites have been spaces of political and social mobilization for many decades by activists within the Palestinian community in Israel. This chapter will explore how memories and acts of return are being mobilized at specific sites of village destruction in the Galilee. In these acts memory plays a big role and is placed at the center of this form of spatial resistance. Space cannot be neutral or simply be 'space', particularly in situations where land is at the forefront of a struggle. Foucault stressed that there is no space that is "dead, fixed, undialectical or immobile" (Foucault 1980, p.70) and it is within this understanding of space as a fluid notion that we can understand the ways in which spatial resistance can be mobilized.

2. Destroying the Galilee's village landscape

The destruction of historic Palestine and its subsequent Judaisation has been and still is a consistent Israeli government practice. Both in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and in Israel proper, the government pursues a line of Jewish expansion whilst attempting to cage in Palestinians into the smallest space possible. Judaisation is an

official Israeli government policy which seeks to maintain a Jewish demographic majority but also a Jewish character to the landscape (Falah 1991, p.69). The maintenance of this Jewish character, or rather the settler character, means that the Arab Palestinian character of the landscape has been seriously violated. The first and most drastic violation occurred during the ethnic cleansing of the Nakba in 1948, where more than 400 Palestinian villages and towns were depopulated from the area that is now considered Israel proper. Falah calls the rural aspect of this ethnic cleansing, the "spatial obliteration of the village landscapes" (Falah 1996, p.281). Only 100 villages in the 1948 Territory would survive this spatial obliteration (Khalidi 1992, p.xxxii). In the Galilee and Haifa, 179 villages were depopulated and destroyed in several military operations (Khaildi 1992). The Galilee however was one of the final areas to fall to Zionist forces in 1948. This was partly due to its northern location, which rendered it further from Zionist strongholds in the southern coastal region, but also because there was a small group of Palestinian volunteers and Arab Liberation Army fighters waging guerilla warfare on the advancing Zionist forces. Pappe writes:

> Thus for a brief period, in courageous defiance of the vastly superior Israeli military power, Palestinian villages for the first time since the ethnic cleansing started, turned themselves into strongholds, standing up to the besieging Israeli troops (Pappe 2006, p.180).

The Galilee was eventually occupied during several military operations, but Operation Hiram (names after the biblical King of Tyre) was perhaps the most severe. It targeted the upper Galilee through a series of aerial bombardments leading to its occupation in late October (Pappe 2006, p.179). Each village has its own story of destruction and survival. Historian Adel Mana published a book documenting these individual village stories in a recent book '*The Nakba and survival: The stories of Palestinians who*

remained in Haifa and the Galilee, 1948-1956 (2016). In an interview with me he explained the peculiarities of the situation in the Galilee:

> In the Upper Galilee, the people thought that if that many villages survived in Nazareth and that the army treated the people as such and the Druze villages survived, then there was a precedence for survival. There was hope for survival and the belief that if you surrender and that if you don't run away you can stay on the land. So this encouraged people to stay...But Ben Gurion said don't worry they will not stay. The only role for Arabs in the Galilee will be to run away. He knew exactly how that would happen. He ordered the army to help them run away, these were the orders of Operation Hiram. To help the people who wanted to leave, to leave. You can help them by firing on them. So Operation Hiram is a totally different story than Nazareth and its villages. And within this operation we find each area and village with its own story. We have in Operation Hiram 14 out of the 24 massacres that Benny Morris wrote about[24] - 14 of them happened in this area in this operation in less than a week. This is a relatively small area. This tells a lot. It tells the story of the policies of Ben Gurion. He wanted the Galilee empty from its people (Mana 2016).

Mana makes an important point that each village has its own Nakba story. Each of these stories contributes to the collective Palestinian Nakba experience. We can also see from Mana's description of the destruction of the village landscape in the Galilee that the impetus behind the Zionist forces was to occupy as much land with as few Palestinians on it. In true settler colonial form, the Zionist project wanted the land without its Indigenous people (Wolfe 2006).

[24] See Benny Morris's '*The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited'* (2004).

The over 400 Palestinian villages that were destroyed and the 100 or so that survived made up the Palestinian village landscape. The villages were similar in that many of them had limited resources and their primary dependence was on agriculture, thus their economic/ecological culture was easy to destroy in 1948. However far from being homogenous, these villages each had a community and narrative distinct to their locality. Some villages were known for their specific agricultural crop such as tobacco, as with the case of Tarshiha, or grapes such as the case with Jeish. Some villages were known to be home to Christians, Muslims and Druze such as Rameh. These villages formed ancient agrarian communities that were similar to other Eastern Mediterranean/ Western Asian communities. This landscape has now been documented well by many academics and Palestinian activists. Perhaps most formidably was the seminal work by Palestinian historian and co-founder of the Institute for Palestine Studies, Walid Khalidi, who produced extensive documentation of the destroyed villages in '*All That Remains'* (1992). Covering 418 villages (not including those in the Naqab), Khalidi presents information in an encyclopedic format with information on each village before its depopulation. He also notes what the site of each destroyed village looked like at the time of writing. In a much more cartographical manner, Palestinian researcher Salman Abu Sitta has also produced important work tracing the village landscape. Through a series of detailed maps, Abu Sitta has marked not only the depopulated villages but also the surviving villages to give a complete picture of the Palestinian landscape prior to its ethnic cleansing. A rather important detail that these maps reveal is that the largest number of villages that survived the ethnic cleansing are located in the Upper Western Galilee (the district of Acca).

In addition to academic scholarship, Palestine's lost landscape has been kept alive by various Palestinian communities in different ways. The Palestinian refugee community outside of Palestine and Israel, relies solely on memories and imaginations of Palestine owing to their exile which has physically severed them from the land for the last four generations. Rochelle Davis has examined the way in which the Palestinian village landscape is preserved through the medium of 'village books'. These particular "village books" were produced by the Palestinian refugee communities living in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the West Bank and chronicle the "everyday life in the village before 1948…they also provide firsthand accounts of the events of the 1948 war…" (Davis 2010, p.4). Maps are another way in which refugee communities have been preserving the destroyed villages. The Palestinians who remained in the borders of the State of Israel, those who were displaced and those who weren't, have also been involved in projects documenting the destroyed villages. However, rather crucially, their access to the land (in most cases) has meant that preserving the Palestinian village landscape has seen a physical return element to it in which Palestinian bodies mobilise at sites of destruction. These acts of return have transformed over the years from private family practice, into more organized mobilization of return activism. This form of activism particularly picked up speed in the years after the Oslo Accords when the right of return was totally absent from the negotiating table.

3. The right of return and the *muhajareen*

During the Nakba, 750,000 Palestinians were expelled from historic Palestine and forced to live in refugee camps in neighbouring host states. They now number over

five and half million and live in 58 official refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza, with their right of return yet to be applied. Of those that remained within the borders of the new Jewish State, there were about 30-40,000 who were displaced internally (Bokae'e 2003, p.2). These internally displaced Palestinians, herein they will be referred to as *muhajareen* meaning displaced in Arabic, consequently settled either in shelter villages or would establish new villages determined unrecognized by the state. The majority of unrecognized villages are those of the Palestinian Bedouin in the Naqab.[25]

Muhajareen is distinct from the word for refugees, *lajaeen*, and indeed so is their experience. Their survival within the borders of the new state meant that they were granted citizenship just as those Palestinians who were not displaced. However just as with the refugees, these displaced Palestinians were not allowed to return home despite many of them being within a few kilometers of their land. For example, many of the people of al-Birweh (Mahmoud Darwish's village) live only three kilometers away from their shelter village of Jedaideh. The *muhajareen* chose shelter villages for a variety of social and economic reasons and sometimes quite simply they went where their relatives were. Their narrative of displacement penetrated the shelter villages, who were already suffering their own Nakba traumas. Nowadays, it is common for the *muhajareen* to identify themselves as simply living in the shelter village but being from elsewhere: "We live in Tarshiha but we are from Iqrit".

Initially these *muhajareen* were under the mandate of UNRWA which was established in 1949 according to the UN General Assembly Resolution 302. Between 1950-1952

[25] As my fieldwork was located in the Galilee, I will focus on the muhajareen in this area and particularly as much of the civil society work on return is situated in the Galilee. This is not to ignore the narratives of displacement and return from the Naqab Bedouin community, rather it is a matter of academic focus.

UNRWA was providing aid and services to the *muhajareen* in the same way as it did for the refugees in the neighbouring host counties (Humphries 2004, p.222). However, this was relinquished in 1952 to the Israeli government who refused to recognize them as a distinct category of displaced persons (Bokae'e 2003, p.2). As such there are definitive numbers of displaced Palestinians inside Israel. Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights estimates (using average natural growth rate) that the number is around 335,000 persons as of 2010, nearly a quarter of the Palestinian community in Israel (BADIL 2010, p.8). Most of them (90%) are located in the north and come from approximately 44 of the 162 depopulated Palestinian villages (Bokae'e 2003, p.7).

Following the relinquishment of UNRWA's responsibility, the *muhajareen* were left in the hands of the new Jewish State. Just as with the refugees beyond the borders, the state legalized the appropriation of the properties of the *muhajareen*. This main legal instrument for this was the Law of Absentee Property (1950) which among several other legal criterions, allowed the state to confiscate property from those who had left their ordinary place of residence (Adalah 2016). The property would then be placed under the custody of the Jewish National Fund (JNF). The *muhajareen* were also legally referred to as 'Present Absentees' by the state (Davis 1997, p.49). Although limited as a legal categorary to the *muhajareen*, it would also sometimes be used to refer to the Palestinian citizens as a whole. This label of 'present absentee' demonstrates rather well that although the Palestinian community are present as citizens, they remain absent from the political and social life of the state.

This right of return of refugees to their original homes was already enshrined in international law before 1948. The UN Resolution 194 was a re-affirmation of this

right and the legal obligations that bind member states (Boling 2001, p.1). Resolution 194 states:

> That the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible (UNRWA website 2017).

This resolution technically applies to all those that were displaced during the creation of the State of Israel including internally displaced persons. The fulfillment of the right of return would mean that Palestinian refugees across the region and those who are internally displaced would be given the right to return to their villages and cities of origin inside the borders of Israel. This legal right has failed to be implemented by the UN and Palestinians have struggled for international recognition of this right. Indeed more often than not, in peace negotiations since 1948, the right of return has always shelved as a 'final status' issue in adherence to Israel's position.

Israel's position has been an unwavering refusal to allow the refugees to return, which is shaped by several issues. Firstly, is that of the historical narrative where Israel's acknowledgement of the right of return would validate many aspects of the Palestinian historical narrative. Mainstream Zionist discourse argues that the Palestinians left in 1948 in response to orders from Arab leaders and as part of their refusal to accept the Jewish state. It also stresses that their return would be that of a fifth column in which they would attempt to destroy the Jewish state. More 'liberal' discourses suggest that the Palestinians fled as a natural outcome of war and there may have been cases of

expulsions but it was necessary in order to establish a Jewish State. Secondly, Israel is concerned with demography and as such enacted its own 'Law of Return' in 1950. This law constitutionally enshrines the right of any Jew in the world to come and seek citizenship in the State of Israel. This is known as *aliyah* and literally means to ascend in Hebrew. The Jewish right of return law has allowed the state to maintain a Jewish majority in the country and has solidified the narrative of Israel/Palestine as the home of world Jewry. Palestinians, on the other hand are seen as a demographic threat to the Jewish character of the State of Israel. The Palestinian citizens of Israel already make up 20% of the population and with generally higher birth rates than their Jewish compatriots, they are often referred to as a ticking time bomb.[26] The fulfillment of the legal right of return for Palestinian refugees in the neighbouring Arab states would drastically alter the numbers in the favor of the Palestinians and would end the Jewish majority. The right of return for Palestinian refugees would therefore signal the expiration of the Jewish Zionist character of the State of Israel. This denial of the right of return is even extended to the internally displaced whose villages lay unoccupied and in ruin, often only kilometers from their current place of residence. Yet the *muhajareen,* are already counted as part of the Arab population inside Israel and so their return to their places of origin would not add to challenging the Jewish majority. This denial of the right to return is thus based on Israel's concern over the validation of the Palestinian historical narrative.

For Palestinians, the right of return is not only an international legal entitlement, it is considered a sacred and a vital component of their political discourse. This theme of

[26] Sayed Kashua, columnist for Haaretz, has written about being perpetually referred to as a ticking bomb; http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.696179

return dominates Palestinian literature, poetry and art, with its physical manifestation embodied in the image of the key, representing the keys of the lost houses of the Palestinian refugees. Return has long been part of the political discourse across the Green Line and it dominated the discourse of the PLO until the Oslo Accords in the early 1990s. Oslo brought about a significant shift and saw the complete marginalization of the refugees and their right of return. It is no coincidence that after the Oslo negotiations, there was an increase in return activism within the 1948 Territory. This marginalization of return as an actual political demand would be repeated throughout the decades after Oslo. Recently, in a particularly shocking move, the Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas gave up his right of return in an interview on Israeli television. Abbas, originally from the Galilean town of Safad, said:

> I visited Safad before once… But I want to see Safad. It's my right to see it, but not to live there… Palestine now for me is '67 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. This is now and forever... This is Palestine for me. I am a refugee, but I am living in Ramallah. I believe that the West Bank and Gaza is Palestine and the other parts are Israel (Sherwood 2012).

Understandably, this statement from the President of the solely recognized representative of the Palestinian people forfeiting his right of return on Israeli national television was met with outrage from the Palestinian public. Abbas later backtracked on his comments and said that he was conforming to formulas set by the international peace process.

The right of return is indeed an ambiguous issue for the Palestinian Authority, although such an important part of Palestinian discourse it is also at direct odds with

the international framework of a two-state solution that the PA continues to engage with. Another PA related outrage with regards to return, was with the 'Palestine Papers', a series of leaked documents reported on by AlJazeera. Amongst the leaked papers was a document from 2007 entitled 'Permanent Status Agreement' which revealed that Palestinian negotiators agreed to the return of 10,000 refugees per year for a maximum of ten years. In a briefing in 2009, chief negotiator Saeb Erekat proposed that they lower the number to 1000 refugees over a period of ten years (Palestine Papers 2007). In adherence to the discourse set by Oslo, the Palestinian Authority has demonstrated its dismissal of and unwillingness to defend the 'right of return' as a collective Palestinian right. At best, it acknowledges return only symbolically for the refugees in exile and for those within the borders of present day Israel, it is entirely ignored.

In the 1948 Territory, numerous Palestinian political parties and movements have called for the return of all Palestinian refugees to their lands. Most notably Abnaa al Balad which called unequivocally for the right of return and the preservation of Palestinian identity amongst all its fragmentations. Abnaa al Balad has long boycotted elections to the Knesset on the grounds of anti-normalisation, in other words they refuse to recognize the legitimacy of Israel as an occupying power (Hussein 2015, p.126). Therefore, the party's discourse and political demands remain outside Israeli institutional politics which upholds the notion of a Jewish state. More recently, the Arab Joint List included in their platform a call for a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem in accordance with resolution 194. However, even though the Arab Joint List functions within the Israeli political system as an Israeli party, it remains on the margins and has yet been unable to bring about significant influence. Thus, the

right of return of Palestinian refugees both internally and externally of the 1948 Territory has never emerged as a serious issue within the Israeli political arena.

As a result, return moved to the grey space inhabited by Palestinian civil society which has developed over the decades to serve the needs of the marginalized and excluded Palestinian community in Israel. The right of return is now a key theme among many civil society initiatives working with themes of memory and identity. Although briefly mentioned in the Future Vision Documents, most of these initiatives are spearheaded by the *muhajareen*. Indeed, Tamir Sorek claims that "the most significant actors responsible for the cultivation of public memory of 1948 are the internally displaced Palestinians" (Sorek 2015, p.76), hence the focus in this chapter on this particular community of Palestinians.

Until the mid 1960s, the *muhajareen*, just as other Palestinians, placed their hope in the Arab States to defeat Israel and return them to their homes. This hope was extinguished with the 1967 war and occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and Golan Heights. The *muhajareen* strategically began to look inwards for hope of return, not only towards local leaders but also towards the PLO. A pivotal moment for the Palestinian citizens of Israel was the Oslo Peace Process of the early 1990s. The hope that was seen in the PLO quickly evaporated, after the PLO representation at these negotiations side-lined the Palestinian community in the 1948 Territory as well as the issue of the right of return. The focus was on establishing a Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In an interview in Shefr 'Amr, at the offices of the Association for the Defense of the Rights of the Internally Displaced, Mohammed Kayal, a founder, explained the grievances felt by the Palestinian community in Israel at the time to me:

> The point of the conference was to distribute power amongst the main players; the Americans and the Israelis. The Palestinians took part as part of the Jordanian delegation, but there was no representation for the Palestinians who are citizens of the state of Israel and there was no representation for the *muhajareen*. The whole world knew that there were refugees in the West Bank, in Gaza, in Syria, in Lebanon, in Jordan, in Egypt and other Arab countries. But they didn't know that a quarter of the Palestinian citizens of Israel are muhajareen or internal refugees (internally displaced persons in international law). There was no one to represent us in this conference or in the Palestinian delegation (Kayal 2016).[27]

As a result, in 1992 a follow up committee was established, partly to deal with the issues of the *muhajareen.* Several years later an organization emerged that claimed representation of the *muhajareen;* the Association for the Defense of the Rights of the Internally Displaced and in 2000 it was registered as a legal NGO. During my fieldwork, I spent a lot of time attending events organized by ADRID as well as talking to those involved in their activities. In the afore mentioned interview, Mohammed explained its development:

> It has been a registered organization since 2000. Before that in 1995 we were under a different name, the Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the Internally Displaced. And in 1992, it was the lead committee for the defense of the rights of the internally displaced. This lead committee was formed in 1992 after the Madrid Conference in October 1991. So the lead committee was formed to represent the destroyed Palestinian villages in what is called Israel. They represented the villages. The committee published a statement that called for the application of the right of return of the refugees and the muhajareen in accordance to the UN resolutions and

[27] See Masalha's edited volume on the internally displaced for more.

> international law. In 1995, this committee grew in representation and held a conference in Ibellin. At this conference a new committee was formed to represent the destroyed villages and the muhajareen. We registered this committee as an NGO according to the law in 2000. As an NGO, we released statements, organized visits to destroyed villages and we also focus on awareness raising among muhajareen but also in general among the Palestinians in *al dakhl* (Kayal 2016).

Not long after ADRID was registered as a legal NGO, they organised a conference in Nazareth where the organization declared itself as the only legitimate representative of the *muhajareen.* Wakim explains that this was done in a bid to protect their rights from being conceded by the Palestinian Authority in any negotiation process, but adds with caution that they had "consulted" the Palestinian Authority on this declaration (Wakim 2001, p.38). Wakim also highlights the centrality of the right of return in Palestinian discourse and in turn the standing of ADRID in the Palestinian community:

> One of the most important things about the issue of the internally displaced is that, along with the right of return in general, it is the only issue that goes to the very root of the Palestinian problem. This is why our committee has the respect of all the Arab political parties- its above political partisanship. So the essence of our work involves not specific issues like fighting for larger budgets, better sewage systems and so on, but the cause of an entire people and its right to exist or not exist (Wakim 2001, p.38).

Wakim identifies that at the root of the Palestinian struggle is return. This is a return not only from exile outside of historic Palestine's borders but also return to land appropriated within the 1948 Territory. The centrality of return also highlights the importance of the relationship between Palestinians and the land. A relationship that

is mirrored in Indigenous communities world-wide (Samson and Gigoux 2017, p.1).

Although ADRID has now become the main focal point for the issue of the *muhajareen*, there are also many different village committees that were established in the 1990's. Most of these committees work with and are members of ADRID, but they also work under the 'Palestinian Right of Return Coalition', an umbrella union for all Palestinian refugee organizations (Boake'e 2003, p.15). Two important village organizations are, however, not members of ADRID. These are the well-known youth groups of Kufr Bir'im and Iqrit. These groups remain separate from ADRID because of their peculiar situation. The villages won a high court decision which allowed them to return home. However, it was blocked by the military court who maintains that their return would be a risk to State security. These villages and the activities of one of their youth groups will be discussed later in the chapter. The development of the return discourse has seen various shifts of focus but its more recent revival in civil society coincides with the revival of memory and oral history initiatives. This intrinsic link between oral history and return is also tied to the connection between Palestinian indigenous identity and the land.

4. Strata of memory and layers of rock

Landscape and memory are hugely intertwined with one another and often just as landscape informs and defines a collective identity so too does memory create a landscape. As the subtitle of this section suggests, "before it can ever be a repose for the senses, landscape is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock" (Schama 1995, p.6-7). During a paper for

the Memory of the World Conference in 2008, Ken Taylor further elaborated on the construction of landscape in specificity to Australia:

> Landscape therefore is not simply what we see, but a way of seeing: we see it with our eye but interpret it with our mind and ascribe values to landscape for intangible – spiritual – reasons. Landscape can therefore be seen as a cultural construct in which our sense of place and memories inhere (Taylor 2008, p.1).

Our memories are partly responsible for constructing the landscape that we see around us. The past seeps in the present and shapes our present surroundings. In Indigenous communities this relationship with the land "goes beyond the attachment to the cultural attributes of a community and extends to the special relationship with the lands where those cultural attributes are formed" (Samson and Gigoux 2017, p.1).

For settler colonial projects, reinventing the new landscape which has been colonised is vital not only to fuse together the settler community but also in the process of Indigenous erasure. In newly occupied Palestine of 1948, the project known as *yehud ha-Galil* (Judaise the Galilee)*,* began shortly after the establishment of the Jewish State. The aim of the project was to turn a former Arab-Palestinian and agrarian landscape into a Jewish-European and modern one. This was important for the Zionist Movement so as to maintain their narrative of a continued Jewish presence on the land. This project has been carried out by various governmental and non-governmental institutions ever since (Lustick 1980, p.129). In the aftermath of 1948, this Judaisation policy was manifested through the confiscation of Palestinian land from not only those who were expelled but also those who remained. Later, extensive Jewish settlement became a means by which the government could Judaise the

region (White 2010, p.9). The Galilee's proximity to the Lebanese border also was used to justify the state's land appropriation in the name of security.

For the last couple of decades, its Arab demographic majority means that the region remains an area of concern for the Zionist project with many Israeli politicians openly airing their despair at the demographic "problem". Indeed former Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon in 2009 warned that "we are losing the Negev and the Galilee (to the Arabs)" and as such "the focus for today is to Judaize the Negev and the Galilee" (Ayalon 2009). The "losing" described by Ayalon refers to the Jewish character of the region and the increasing Arab demography rather than governmental control over the region. Pappe sums up this continuous attempt to wipe out the Palestinian character of the Galilee:

> But today, despite all of Israel's efforts to Judaise the Galilee- beginning with direct expulsions in the 1940s, military occupation in the 1960s, massive confiscation of land in the 1970s, and a huge official Judaization settlement effort in the 1980s- it is still the only area in Palestine that has retained its natural beauty, its Middle Eastern flavor and its Palestinian culture (Pappe 2006, p.179).

This Judaisation of space, or rather de-Palestinization of the landscape, has been identified by Falah as a "strategy of de-signification". Falah states that "by removing the past cultural traces of other peoples from the landscape, undercut and weakened Palestinian claims to this territory, i.e., a 'strategy of de-signification'" (Falah 1996, p.257). He goes on to explain that "places that were loci for Palestinian culture and national identity, the vessels of a collective memory of the region's palimpsest- like cultural landscape, were obliterated in acts of de-signification" (Falah 1996, p.257).

“De-signification” as a term is perhaps not strong enough to describe how the Israeli state attempted and continues to remove the link between the landscape of Palestine and Palestinian collective memory. It suggests a slow and passive wearing down over time, rather than a violent and deliberate attempt to detach the Indigenous people from their land. A perhaps more accurate description is offered by Pappe, who terms it “memoricide” which implies a more violent act of elimination (Pappe 2006, p.225). Pappe details in particular the creation of Jewish National Fund national parks which were placed on top of the ruins of Palestinian villages. In these spaces, the JNF attempted to replace the indigenous flora with species native to Europe. An effort that is described by Pappe as a Europeanization of the landscape (Pappe 2006, p.227).

As previously discussed, Indigenous communities have an identity and discourse that is very much land based, largely due to having experienced invasion of their land and then subsequent and continuous attempts at removal from this land. Many Indigenous communities also have a deep ontological relationship with the land reinforcing the link between collective imagination and landscape. This desire for ‘return’ is also expressed by the *muhajareen* who so often reside very close to their villages of origin. However the desire for return can also be an expressed by those who have not be displaced from their homes. This return is not a spatial return but a temporal one in which the desire is a return to the Palestine that exists in the collective imagination and memories of the community.

This experience of displacement is thus one that affects all the Palestinians within the 1948 Territory. Although a mixture of internally displaced people and those that survived the 1948 upheaval, they have since experienced of being socially and

politically displaced within a state that simultaneously grants them citizenship but excludes them entirely. The exclusion that creates this social and political displacement manifests itself in segregated living spaces, restrictions in freedom of expression, house demolition, land confiscation etc. But perhaps most importantly it is manifested in the denial of their collective identity. Return is thus expressed both as a spatial desire and a temporal one, both of which rely heavily on the memories and post-memories of Palestine.

Returning to the link between landscapes and memory, Casey contends that self and place are intrinsically linked to one another, both working together to create the human experience:

> It is a mark of contemporary philosophical thought, especially phenomenology, to contest the dichotomies that hold the self apart from …place… we can no longer distinguish neatly between physical and personal identity…place is regarded as constitutive of one's sense of self... each is essential to the being of the other. In effect, there is no place without self and no self without place (Casey 2001, p.684).

Spaces are not simply passive repositories of events, but continuous productions which define the human experience. Specific spaces can also hold vital importance to a community's collective memory as was indicated by Nora in '*Les Lieux de mémoire*' (Nora 1989). Indeed the Galilee is dotted with sites of "*lieux de mémoire*" indicating signs of a past life; ruined mosques, churches, cemeteries and ancient terraces stand as silent memorials to the ethnic cleansing of 1948. Not too long after the violent upheavals, these sites of destruction played host to visits by families who would come to see their land and share stories of Palestine before 1948. It became

a commemorative practice and many families would visit these sites on dates that were significant for them. It was not until the 1990s that this developed into established “return activism” with various groups involved in mobilizing Palestinians in the ground in an attempt to reclaim the landscape and counter the memoricide. Ben Ze’ev and Aburaiya described it as middle ground politics which describes the link made between the notion of ‘Palestine’ and everyday grievances:

> The activities at demolished Palestinian villages and towns are one of the most salient manifestations of this middle ground…these activities create a new sense of group identity for many Palestinians and can be termed a re-Palestinization of places in Israel (Ben Ze’ev and Aburaiya 2004, p.639).

This re-Palestinization of places in Israel is not done through the physical rebuilding of the destroyed villages. Although restoration work can take place in limited forms in cemeteries, mosques and churches, the re-Palestinization is seen through a re-connection of Palestinian collective memories and the landscape. Personal memories, inherited memories, local narratives and national narratives intertwine forming a collective multilayered Palestinian story of displacement which is both physical and abstract. In a state in which ‘space’ is the articulation of the hegemonic Zionist narrative, this is an important act of defiance and Indigenous resistance.

5. Localized return activism

I began this chapter with a description of some observational field work I was doing in the destroyed village of Iqrit. The event I attempted to attend was organized by the

Iqrit youth group and advertised through a Facebook event. The event description was as follows:

> In commemoration of Land Day, and on the occasion of the approaching Easter holiday, and in preparation of visits to those we lost in the cemetery of Iqrit, we invite you to participate in field work in the vicinity of the church and the cemetery in Iqrit. The work includes cleaning the dry grass, opening up the paths and planting the flowers around the cemetery after some restoration works…We hope for your participation and Happy Easter ... Thank you all and we shall return (Iqrit group 2015)!

As noted in the Facebook description, the event was organized on occasion of two important dates; Land Day and Easter. Land Day has become an important date in the Palestinian commemorative calendar. It marks the 30th of March 1976, when the Israeli government confiscated 2000 hectares of land in the Galilee and killed six Palestinians in the resulting protests. Land Day's legacy evokes images of land based resistance to state appropriation and indeed many commemorative events focus on the connection between the Palestinian people and the land. The second occasion was that of the Easter celebrations. Indeed Iqrit is a Christian village, and the community still gathers in its restored church to celebrate various Christian holidays and communal events such as weddings and christenings. Using these two significant dates, one national and one religious (although not falling on the exact day of each), to mobilise the community on the land makes a linkage with the wider Palestinian narrative. The struggle of Iqrit is to reclaim the land and their right to return to the village which was affirmed to them not only under international law but rather uniquely by the state's high court. However despite this unique legal position, the struggle is also one that links to the wider Palestinian struggle and the activists affirm this in their group statement:

> We, men and women, young and old, believe in our undeniable right to live on the land of our forefathers as a legitimate natural right, which even the State of Israel itself has recognized twice through its Supreme Court of Justice. We know that (this) has put us in a somewhat advanced position… (but) we must exploit it and achieve the right of return in all its meaning, across the spectrum…Our path is full of challenges and sometimes there seems to be no end to the moment of occupation and discrimination, but the steadfastness of generations before us is enough to give us the hope and faith that we are capable and gives us the strength and patience to continue the march to return…With your support we continue our march and with your support we will strengthen and prove our existence. With your support, we will go to village after village from Bir'am to Al Basa, to Umm al Zinat, to Tirat Haifa, to Manshiya, to 'Afer, to Summil, to Raas al Ahmar, to Kufr Sbeit, to Khubayza, to Ma'lul, to Al Araqeeb and so on to each village whose families were displaced and not allowed to return...We expect to hear and be guided from all our people inside and in the Diaspora…we believe in the right of the struggle of Iqrit and the return of all refugees (Iqrit group 2015)

The local struggle and wider Palestinian struggle intertwine, and here we can refer back to Ben Ze'ev and Aburaiya's "middle ground politics" in which daily concerns are merged with the wider concept of Palestine (Ben Ze'ev and Aburaiya 2004, p.639). The statement explains that the youth group are using Iqrit as a starting point in the fulfillment of the right of return, and that they will continue on to the other destroyed villages. Some of the villages listed include those whose descendants live beyond the borders of present-day Israel, thus making the demand for the return of external refugees as well as internal refugees implicit. They assert the importance of the right of return "in all its meaning", which means that they conceptualize the right of return to include the refugees living outside the borders of present day Israel.

Even though the event did not take place on the day that I went to the village, it was rescheduled and held at a later date. However far from being a redundant visit I spent a few hours in the village sitting with some of the youth, including Jeries, one of the leading activists. Having not pre-arranged an interview with him or the others, and feeling uncomfortable to demand one on the spot, we chatted informally whilst they carried on with various tasks at the encampment. Iqrit is in a beautiful location, on the top of a hill with breathtaking views of the Galilee and the mountain range that sits on the border with Lebanon. This landscape is very familiar to me, and it is one that embodies all my memories and post-memories of Palestine. It was thus a nice way to spend the day, despite the research 'hiccup'.

In addition to these events, the Iqrit youth group has been maintaining a continuous physical presence on their village land in an effort to reclaim it since 2013. They were given permission from the authorities to restore the church and clear the cemetery. But they are forbidden to build any structure or make a change to the landscape, this includes planting any plants. The group managed to challenge the rather grey area between restoration and building and set up camp in an annex of the church. This annex serves as living quarters and includes a functional kitchen and a communal social and sleeping area. The physical presence on the land is combined with the learning of the history of the land and of village life before 1948 from elders. Indeed the destroyed village has been hosting a summer camp for children every year since the late 1990s. These camps consist of musical and artistic workshops, storytelling from elders but also from those familiar with the historical narratives and agricultural activities such as planting and learning about the land. Since the activists set up their continuous presence at the village site, they have been deepening their ontological

relationship with the land. This has involved replanting indigenous flora, learning their different uses and using only basic amenities. The lead activists in the group also take a lead in sharing the memories and narratives of the village with the younger children who come and take part in the various activities.

By replicating the ways in which their grandparents lived on the land, their narratives transcend time boundaries by bringing the past into the lived present and challenging the rupture in time that came with the Nakba. Furthermore, by taking care of the village land and maintaining the church structure they are performing acts of ownership and denying the authority of the state over this site. Tending to appropriated land is reiterated in narratives and anecdotes across Palestine. A common one is of *falaheen* returning to their lands, crossing treacherous and newly imposed borders to tend to their olive trees. The romanticisation of the *falah* and his/her dedication to the olive trees is an emphasis on the ontological relationship between Palestinians and the land. Iqrit, as one of the many internal frontiers between the settler state and the Indigenous people, is a space in which Palestinians are demonstrating that physical return to the land has the possibility to challenge the time and space limitations imposed by Israel.

The legal parameters set by the state are being challenged by the group and because of the hugely symbolic implications with this act of return which could set precedence for other destroyed villages, the police have violently cracked down on the activists several times. In one of my conversations with them, I was told of an incident in the summer of 2014 when the police raided the village, uprooting trees, confiscating furniture and other belongings found in the church annex. Three activists were arrested and detained overnight. The symbolic power in this type of return activism,

is in the reversing of the original displacement and challenging the notion of a Judaised landscape which has replaced the Palestinian village landscape. Drawing on Foucault, Charles Tripp discusses how “power clothes itself for much of the time in the guise of normalcy of routine… (it) need not be questioned because it is so much part of the ‘natural’ order of things” (Tripp 2013, p.2).

Resistance to this kind of power does not have to be manifested in an *intifada*. It can also be subtle, unorganized and even private. James C. Scott writes of “every day resistance” such as cultural resistance or simply non-cooperation that are continuous rather than one off rebellions/ revolutions (1985). This resistance can thus broadly be understood as a challenging of the ‘norm’ and a contestation of the system of power.

Figure 8.

This re-Palestinization of the landscape however goes beyond symbolism, and is an act of spatial resistance in the face of aggressive erasure of the Indigenous landscape. Fluid notions of the landscape have allowed Palestinians to re-imagine the destroyed village landscape as one that is very much alive and living. Memory is playing a big role here and is being placed at the center of spatial resistance. These return activities are being mobilized to counter the state's attempt to erase and create social amnesia among the Palestinian community in Israel. Particularly in the Galilee where the demographic majority remains in the favor of the Palestinian residents. Erasure of the Indigenous people did not succeed through violent dispossession in 1948 and thus it became imperative for Israel to erase the narrative and history of this village landscape. For Indigenous communities in general that rely heavily on oral history, memory and transmissions of memories of vital importance. Indigenous scholar Jeff Corntassel explains a Cherokee (Tsalagi) saying in a conversation on unsettling settler colonialism. He explains:

> In terms of the temporal, at what point does forgetfulness become a problem? A Tsalagi saying, "Live in a longer 'now'— learn your history and culture and understand it is what you are now," urges us to consider that notions of time are fluid and flexible. After all, the Tsalagi word for "I am forgetting" is agikewsga, which literally means I am blind or am unable to see something that happened in the past (Snelgrove, Dhamoon and Corntassel 2014, p.19).

Corntassel emphasizes the importance of the remembering the past in the present whilst also stressing the fluidity of the temporal. The return activism at Iqrit and in other destroyed villages is challenging both temporal and spatial limits enforced by Israel on the Palestinians. Unlike most Palestinians, the Palestinian citizens of Israel

have relative ease of access to the land of historic Palestine. A phrase that was reiterated by many during my fieldwork was “we are living on the site of the Nakba, this is where the Nakba happened”. What is meant is that the Palestinians that survived the ethnic cleansing in 1948 are living on the ruins of historic Palestine. It is this physical presence in historic Palestine that allows this kind of return activism to propose a serious challenge to the normalcy of the Israeli state. Although seemingly very localized, the Iqrit activists have not separated their struggle from the wider Palestinian nation struggle as apparent from their official group statement. Iqrit is the starting point, and will be used to set precedence for return.

6. Institutionalizing return

As previously mentioned, return to destroyed villages and appropriated family land was common practice among many families in the decades following the Nakba. However the personal narratives and images that accompanied these visits to ruined villages remained isolated “failing to infiltrate the national discourse” (Ben Ze’ev and Aburaiya 2004, p.640). This began to change in the 1980s as oral history started gaining traction globally as a political tool and return visits in historic Palestine began to enter a more public sphere. Indeed the biggest commemorative event of the Palestinian citizens of Israel, Land Day, began incorporating visits to depopulated villages and by the 1990’s return became a main part of the event with banners demanding return and narrators sharing their expulsion stories (Sorek 2015, p.74). The commemorative practice of ‘returning’ also takes place in other societies where population expulsion or transfer has occurred. In Greece and Turkey, after the 1923

Treaty of Lausanne, 1.5 million people were forcibly transferred (Hirschon 2003, p.3). In recent decades people from both sides have been undertaking commemorative visits, so much so that both the Greek and Turkish authorities came to an agreement in order to reduce the bureaucracy at the border crossings (George 2015, Jerusalem). Commemorative return differs from actual return in that it is only temporary and on a specific occasion. As a commemorative act, this can be part of healing process in the case of trauma whether it is individual or collective. However commemorative return can also be used for political mobilization in which a demand is made for actual return. As a communal practice, marches can also strengthen the collective narrative and identity. Such is the case with the commemorative marches conducted in Dakota by Indigenous activists. In 2002, several dozen marchers began a 150 mile journey from the Lower Sioux Reservation in Dakota to the site of an Indigenous concentration camp. They were commemorating a forced march along the same route that Dakota people were made to march in 1862. Since this first march in 2002 many more have taken place. Speaking of this march and of commemorative marches in general, Myla Vincenti Carpio explains:

> A commemorative march is about community memory- what a community chooses to remember and why. For Indigenous people maintaining our collective memories and histories, it is fundamental to who we are and we can be…honoring our own history and reclaiming our own perspectives remind us of what our people went through in our fight to survive. The commemorative march is part of that process (Carpio 2006, p.174).

In historic Palestine during the 1990s there were many return visits and small marches taking place, organized by various village committees and ADRID. These

visits were usually comprised of tens of people, returning to a depopulated site and sometimes clearing cemeteries or doing reconstruction work on a mosque or church. In 1999 a march to the village of Ghabsiyye in the Western Galilee, organized by ADRID, would become a catalyst for a larger annual march known as the March of Return. The march to Ghabsiyye included a procession and gathering where elders told their expulsion stories and participants held signs demanding the right of return. Sorek notes that there were also many signs demonstrating political 'sensitivity' with pacifist messages such as "The road to peace will pass through our village", "The land is wide enough for everyone" and "We demand the implementation of the Supreme Court decision from 1950" (Sorek 2015, p.74). The March of Return has since become the biggest event on the Palestinian political calendar inside Israel. The event has become more popular and in recent years has seen tens of thousands of people taking part. As mentioned, the event is organised by ADRID in cooperation with many other civil society groups working in tandem. Many of those who work in ADRID or are active participants in their events are affiliated with various political parties, however as an organization they remain non-affiliated. Indeed as Isabelle Humphries explains:

> Political communication at a grassroots rather than party level- should be central to understanding politics and identity of the marginalized community of Palestinians inside Israel (Humphries 2008, p.181).

There is also a divide between those activists who are secular and those who are religious. Those involved in ADRID tend to be more secular and there is little affiliation with the Islamic Movement who also began increasing their activities in the 1990s. During this time they also became involved in the Land Day commemorative activities but tensions arose as the Movement objected to the mixed gendered crowd, whilst

the Communists took issues with their religious chants and slogans (Sorek 2015, p.63). In terms of their historical work, the Movement focuses on the restoration of cemeteries, shrines and mosques, as well as taking a leading role in the Kafr Qasim commemorations. Today whilst tensions remain, the Islamic Movement and ADRID do not work against each other but rather in parallel, with the latter focusing on an international rights based approach to return and the former returning to the land in order to preserve and restore sites on the basis of religious sanctity.

After some debate, it was decided by ADRID and others that the March of Return should be held on Israeli Independence Day and not on the commemorative date of the Nakba which falls on 15th May. Israeli Independence Day changes every year according to the Hebrew calendar. There are several reasons why the organizers of the march thought it was important to coincide this event with the day in which Israeli independence is celebrated. Firstly, they believed it would strengthen the counter narrative and challenge the idea of a celebratory day. Indeed, the slogan of the event is “Your independence is our Nakba”, which was emphasised to me during the 2015 march, where participants of the march were joking at the expense of the Israeli police who had come to monitor the event. I was told several times; “This is our revenge, that instead of celebrating their independence with their families in a park they have to come and watch us commemorate our catastrophe”. This sums up well the importance of holding the March of Return on the same date as Israeli Independence Day.

Secondly, for many first and second generation Nakba survivors, during the military regime, Israeli Independence Day was a day in which they would be forced to take the day off school or work. Palestinians would go with their families and would have a BBQ in a park (usually rather ironically in a park that would be hiding the remains

of a destroyed Palestinian village). During my fieldwork this narrative of being forced to celebrate Israeli Independence came up often as an added element to the trauma of the Nakba. Shira Robinson documents the "coercion and surveillance that shadowed these events…and the monitoring of those who did not take part in the celebrations" (Robinson 2013, p.116). From this we can see that there was little space to remember the Nakba. People were simply too frightened to talk about it and memories and narratives were confined to private spaces rather than public ones. Thus, for the organisers of the March of Return, would be the "antidote" to this particular trauma of having to celebrate Israeli Independence (Sorek 2015, p.72). Similar to that of the presence of the Iqrit youth group on their village land, the March of Return is a symbolic reversing of the original displacement through the physical act of returning to the site of destruction (Sorek 2015, p.152). In this way the march not only challenges the predominant Zionist Independence Day narrative of "a land without a people" by reviving the Palestinian village landscape but they also challenge spatial restrictions placed on the community by returning to land that was appropriated from them in 1948. The political demand of the march is not simply for historical recognition, it is also for restorative justice which would see the right of return, as understood under international law, fulfilled. Mohammed summed up the official demands of the march to me:

> The march is the main activity organised by ADRID. It carries the political message, that we are demanding our right to return and that there is no substitute to the right of return. Even if there was a truce or peace in the region, there has to be a guarantee of the right of return. We recognize that this is not going to happen in the next few years but we have preserve and have to raise awareness among our people, the Jewish people and the world. Last year and this year we are inviting foreign journalists

> to cover the march. We have also invited consuls and ambassadors. The march is also a message to the Palestinian authority which does not raise with any force the issue of the return of the refugees and the muhajareen. And of course this is a human right and there will not be peace in the region without the right of return (Mohammed 2016).

I attended two March of Returns during my fieldwork and several prior to beginning my doctoral research. For my research I wanted to attend the events as an observing participant and talk to people, listen and watch rather than interview some of the tens of thousands taking part. In his paper '*Talking whilst walking: a geographical archaeology of knowledge*', Jon Anderson discusses "the embodied art of walking through particular co-ingredient environments for recollection, in short: talking whilst walking" as an ethnographic research tool (Anderson 2004, p.259). Anderson argues that this form of participant observation enables the researcher to observe the unfolding relationship between the landscape and the individuals. For the two marches I attended during my fieldwork years, I used this method of walking participant observation. I preferred to talk to people on the march whilst walking rather than conduct formal interviews which would disrupt people's participation. I was also aware that these events attracted many journalists, local and international, who spent a lot of time interviewing participants. I did not want people to mistake me for a journalist and perhaps repeat a pre-prepared narrative. Although I did explain to everyone I spoke to that I was a doctoral researcher and that the event would be included in my research. The first year I attended the March of Return (for my doctoral fieldwork) was on the 23rd April 2015. The march took place on the land of the village of Hadatha in the lower Galilee region. There were dozens of coaches which had driven people from as far as the Naqab. Many of those taking part were young adults,

ranging from their late teens to the early 30s, however there were also many families with young children and some elderly first generation Nakba survivors. The march followed the usual formula of a procession to the site of the destroyed village (usually not more than a few kilometers) followed by a rally. There was an estimate of at least 10,000 participants attending from all over historic Palestine.

Figure 9.

Participants at the march waved Palestinian flags and carried symbols that are synonymous with the narrative of the national struggle such as the key (the symbol of return) and the Handala. They also carried signs bearing the names of other destroyed villages, emphasizing that the march is not limited to Hadatha but rather it is about all the destroyed villages and the people that were displaced from them. The limited number of partisan banners or placards was noticeable. At the rally there were

multiple speakers from different political parties including the head of the Joint List, MK Ayman Odeh and Joint List MK Ahmad Tibi. Leaders from ADRID spoke in addition to various other committees and organisations. The rally had moments of both sobriety and festivity. The more sober elements were the speeches and the shared stories of expulsion from first generation Nakba survivors. Alessandro Portelli's concept of "history telling" is where the narrator weaves lived experience into the historical narrative, blurring the lines of individual experience and collective experience (Portelli 1997, p.6). The expulsion from one village, although maybe different in a few particularities, mirrors the expulsions and destructions of the over 400 Palestinian villages in 1948. There is a common Nakba story and in particular for those who managed to stay within the state borders there is a common story of expulsion and then survival. The more festive elements of the march include dancing traditional debke and music. In the past marches have included art installations, such as the one in the destroyed village of Lubya where multi-generational portraits were hung from trees.

Two years later in 2016, the march took place in the Naqab for the first time ever. In an interview prior to the march, Mohammed from ADRID explained the importance of this geographical shift:

> The people of the Naqab have many unrecognized villages and many incidents of homes being destroyed. There are many plans to remove the Arab Palestinian Bedouin from their land including the Prawer Plan. But the Naqab and the area near Gaza also have tens of villages (around 77) that are destroyed. And of course, Beir Al Sabaa used to be an Arab town in the past and now today most of the residents are Jewish. So it was natural for us to try and move the march there, but this year we really felt the readiness and willingness of the people of the Naqab to hold the March

> of Return on their land The March is on the lands of a destroyed village, not an unrecognized village. They were thinking that the march would be in the village of 'Araqib but we refused because it is not a destroyed village but rather it is constantly being destroyed (more than 90 times). So we decided that it would take place at a destroyed village and it would be the village of Zubala (Kayal 2016).

The implication here is that the Naqab is often neglected with regards to the destroyed village narrative. Mohammed cites 77 villages that were destroyed in the Naqab area in 1948. This neglect is also exemplified by the fact that many NGOs and civil society organisations base their main offices in the Galilee. Mohammed also clarifies the focus of ADRID; the organization focuses on the destroyed villages during the Nakba period and not the 'unrecognized villages' which are being consistently demolished by the state in the Naqab. The organization is thus making a choice to focus its demands on an international rights based approach to the right of return. Mohammed also explained another reason for the geographical shift:

> Another reason is that we are one people. The authorities are trying to use the policy of division and trying to divided us on sectarian levels; Muslim, Christian, Druze and Bedouin. But we are one people and the point of the march is to strengthen communication between the Naqab, the triangle and the Galilee. We want to work with the people of the Naqab and strengthen their sumud in their unrecognized villages and their recognized villages. We want to defend their land and to fight against plans such as Prawer (Kayal 2016).

This march in the Naqab was to the village of Wadi Zubalah, a village destroyed and ethnically cleansed of its Palestinian Bedouin population in 1948. Its expelled residents were resettled by military order to Umm al Hiran, another village, in the 1950s and they have lived there ever since. Rather cruelly Umm al Hiran (at the time of writing) is facing demolition orders with the state attempting to speed to the process

up. The repeated destruction of Umm Hiran is a powerful demonstration of how the settler colonial project creates a nonlinear temporal reality for the Indigenous community. The repeated tragedies of displacement and forcible expulsion from the land places Palestinians in the continual cycle of *al nakba al mustimirrah*. In Kayal's previous statement he said that ADRID only focused on the destroyed villages of 1948, however Um al Hiran demonstrates very well that the two cannot be dissociated. Neither in the perception of the settler state and neither in their common fate.

Speaking to an activist at the march, Raed Abu al-Qiyan, he told me of how his family had been forced out of Wadi Zubalah. He then explained that he had brought all his children including his four-month-old daughter, arguing it was important for the young to come and see 'the land of our grandparents and the well that they used to drink from and the houses that they used to live in, to know our history so they can continue coming here' (al-Qiyan 2016). This sentiment of being on the land and knowing the history is mirrored by the Iqrit activists, who also show younger generations how the first generation used to live on the land.

During the rally prominent figures in the Palestinian community inside Israel including MK Ayman Odeh, MK Haneen Zoabi, heads of prominent NGO organisations and elders from Wadi Zubalah were called forward to mix soil from the north of historic Palestine with the soil of the Naqab in the south. This symbolic gesture was meant to emphasize Mohammed's sentiment of "we are one people" in the face of attempts by the state to divide the Palestinian community. The singing of '*Muwtini*', the de facto anthem for the Palestinian community inside historic Palestine, is also a feature of the March of Return.

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Figure 10.

7. Conclusion

As we know the right of return has yet to be fulfilled by Israel both for the refugees externally and internally. Iqrit and Kufr Bir'am are examples where village youth groups have undertaken self-return but face threat of removal and arrest continuously. This self-return is also limited in that the activists are restricted in their activities on the land. They cannot rebuild and thus the return can only be for the few and not for the entire displaced community. However the return of these activist groups is significant in other ways. They reinforce the Palestinian narrative and actively preserve the collective and inherited memories of the community. Learning from the first generation about the way in which they lived on the land, and replicating

this for the younger descendants of the village, the activists are transcending time boundaries by bringing the past into the lived present. Thus challenging the rupture in time that was created with the 1948 Nakba. The March of Return contrastingly, is an institutionalized form of return activism and has become the most important commemorative event on the Palestinian political calendar. Drawing at its height tens of thousands of participants, this event is an aesthetic tribute to the identity of the Palestinian community inside historic Palestine. An important point with regards to aesthetics is that often the marches take place off the beaten track and therefore not necessarily in sight of Jewish Israelis. Although the march looks like a protest and in many ways is a protest, it is also an organized one which receives a permit from the state authorities in order for it to take place. In this way it sits in Scott's 'vast territory' between "overt collective defiance of powerholders' and 'complete hegemonic compliance" (Scott 1985, p.136).

The March of Return does not have revolutionary consequences and its goal has never been to overthrow the state. Neither is it aimed at changing the political opinions or understandings of the Zionist hegemonic narrative of the Jewish Israeli community. Rather, it serves to strengthen the narrative of the Palestinian community in the 1948 Territory by intertwining collective memories with placing Palestinian bodies on Palestinian land. It is thus an act of spatial resistance, challenging the 'dead' and 'immobile' Palestinian village landscape by placing oral history at the center whilst asserting itself as a form of land based resistance.

Speaking to Rana, an activist and artist from Tarshiha, she emphasized the intrinsic link between the narratives and the memorial legacy of the first generation of Nakba survivors with that of the land based resistance:

> We have to be in charge of our narrative. If you forget all these layers of suffering and exile, what is left? Nothing…it has also to do with the elderly. We are living on their legacy and memory. My grandfather used to say if anyone dares to uproot an olive tree he will dammed for all his life. If anyone will exchange a piece of land with…the occupiers he will also be dammed for all his life. That is why we still own 4 dunums of land in one of the settlements (Kfar Avradim). They were outraged to know we still own it. So what they do is they come to the family and say ok either you lose everything or you exchange it for somewhere else. And we refused to do anything. So the land is still there and they cannot do anything to it. So we still own it, it is part of our great-grandfather's will not to exchange it. And my father, my brothers and I have agreed we will never sell it. And it's a big victory (Rana 2015).

This victory of not selling their land that Rana talks about is contrasted with a rather more somber theme that emerged from this particular part of my fieldwork. Palestinians are returning to appropriated and stolen land in death. In an afore mentioned interview, Adel Mana, explained the spatial situation of his village (Majd al Krum), which it is "being strangled on all sides" and forbidden from building new houses on much of the village land. Adel however explained a grey area in which the state was happy to turn a blind eye:

> The Israeli authorities do not allow the residents to build on the land south of the main road…they try to stop anyone building south of the road and anyone who does build, they destroy their house. Despite this… the residents built a new ceremony south of the road. During the war on Lebanon, exactly ten years ago, two young men were martyred from Hezbollah rockets. Some of the land south of the road belongs to refugees in Lebanon from Majd al Krum, people were thinking of making this land into a cemetery years ago but the government refused. But when these young men were martyred the people of the village decided to make a cemetery for martyrs south of

> the road and they buried them there. They removed the olive trees and built a wall around it. Today this is the main cemetery for Majd al Krum. So if people cannot live on their land at least they can die on their land (Mana 2016).

Mana's final words are rather poignant and pessimistic about the possibility for the right of return. Rasha, a third generation woman from Iqrit, similarly notes that return to the land has thus far only been achieved in death:

> The dream for all refugees is to return to the land, to return to the villages. And for the ones still in the *watan* (homeland) this dream is only realized when one dies. My grandfather for example returned to his village when he died in 1996. The relationship between my grandfather and his village is embodied in my visits to the cemetery (Rasha 2016).

This return after life is perhaps best epitomized on a national level by Ibrahim Abu Lughod's return. Palestine's foremost academic and intellectual, Abu Lughod died in 2001. His wish was to be buried in the city of Jaffa, from which he was expelled in 1948. After many negotiations and in an unprecedented move, the Israeli authorities allowed for the funeral to be conducted in Jaffa. The funeral was an act of resistance in itself, the body of a Palestinian refugee was returning home covered in Palestinian flags. This return was described most beautifully by Mahmoud Darwish who gave the eulogy:

> The eternal tree of Paradise grows in the city of Jaffa…He returned, to plant in it the tree of knowledge, and he was that tree….He was born in Jaffa and to Jaffa he returned, to remain, there for eternity, close to the tree of paradise (Darwish 2001).

Chapter Six

Indigenous Imaginings:

Recreating the past and envisioning the future

1. Introduction

In an interview with the Journal for Palestine Studies, Wakim Wakim, a well-known activist, lawyer and spokesperson for the Association for the Rights of the Internally Displaced recalled a return visit by Ghassan Kanafani's son to Palestine:

> I remember how upset…(he) was when he came to visit a few years ago and discovered that Haifa was so densely built up with factories and all, whereas he had imagined it to be full of orange groves. So we took him north, near the Lebanese border, to the al-Bassa area, to Iqrit, Bir'im and Ma'alia, in other words to where the landscape is still untouched. There he felt that Palestine was still alive, and he said, "Now my soul has been returned to me (Wakim 2001, p.32).

Wakim's anecdote demonstrates the way in which the Galilee is imagined by Palestinians both returning to Palestine and those already living there. Having seen Kanafani's distress at the urbanized and Judaized Haifa, Wakim took him north to what he considered as the "untouched" Galilee. It was here that Kanafani's soul was returned to him, presumably because his imagined Palestine came to life in the Galilee. The idea of this region being "untouched" is of course a romanticized notion. It is romanticized because it imagines a Palestine frozen in time, with the Nakba as the only moment in history. It also glides over the fact that the Galilee suffered the same fate of ethnic cleansing and occupation as the rest of historic Palestine. However, the area has the highest concentration of villages that survived the ethnic

cleansing in 1948 and the population of Palestinians in the region has now overtaken Jewish Israelis with some estimates at 60 per cent (Pappe 2011, p.26). Additionally, as alluded to by Wakim, the Galilee has also retained much of its Arab character despite Israel's subsequent and consistent attempts at Judaisation. In a rather similar iteration of this notion of an 'untouched' Galilee, Ibrahim Abu Lughod described his first return visit to Palestine since his expulsion in 1948 in a conversation with Hisham Ahmed-Fararjeh. He describes how he was first taken to the north before he finally returned home to Jaffa:

> The next day we took a tour of the Galilee. I remember being impressed by the Galilee and overwhelmed by how incredibly beautiful it was. Despite the fact that Jews were probably the majority in the area, I felt the cultural dominance of the Arabs. This was so apparent despite the many years of Israeli control. As we travelled in the villages and between the cities, I felt as if I was in an Arab country. This is Palestine. Jews were present in Palestine in 1948 when I was there. Therefore I didn't feel like I was in an alien country (Fararjeh 2003, p.134-135).

Abu Lughod also uses 1948 as his temporal reference point in his recollection of the past. In these two anecdotes recounted by Wakim and Abu Lughod, the landscape of the Galilee is used to demonstrate both what Palestine was and what Palestine could be. Abu Lughod imagines Palestine as an Arab country with Jews present, but uses the present tense "this is Palestine" rather than the future tense of "this could be Palestine". For Abu Lughod, Palestine is still there and beneath the settler colonial veneer.

Recreating the past and imagining a Palestinian future may be easier in the Galilee not only because of its cultural autonomy thanks to civil society and its higher concentration of surviving villages, but also because many of the depopulated village

ruins have not been built upon. In fact, according to extensive research by geographer Salman Abu Sitta, 90 per cent of the original built areas of these villages are left as ruins (Abu Sitta 2001). Palestine in its past and future state can thus be imagined not only with the help of memories and post-memories, but with a landscape that retains an Arab character and also clear traces of an Arab past. Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury describe the landscape shortly after 1948 as one that defied silence:

> The landscape defied silence, as it provided a powerful context for transmitting the stories of *tahjeer* (expulsion), through the hundreds of evacuated and destroyed towns all over the country, the deserted Arab neighbourhoods in the Palestinian cities that became known as mixed cities (such as Haifa and Acca)…The Arab houses (recognized by the identifiable Arab architectural style) remained as a silent yet articulate testimony to the *tahjeer*. New generations of Palestinians could not avoid these reminders (Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury 2017, p.400).

As I have already mentioned, recreating the past is an essential part of imagining. After decades of denial, Palestine's past has been recreated in a multitude of ways, from the creation of new archives to its memorialization in museums. Futures have also been conceptualized in the form of vision manifestos but also in material conceptualizations. Recreating the past and imagining the future are thus intrinsically tied. In the case of Indigenous communities they are ultimately acts of resistance as they refuse to conform to the settler colonial subjugation of their temporalities. Indeed Indigenous people are not meant to survive the settler colonial project, thus the revival of their past to create a blue print for the future constitutes a significant act of Indigenous resistance and a potential pathway for decolonization.

In '*Decolonizing Methodologies'*, Linda Smith explains that the impetus of recent Indigenous research and knowledge production is "the survival of peoples, cultures

and languages: the struggle to become self-determining and the need to take back control of our destinies" (Smith 2016, p.142). It is this latter part that is of interest in this chapter, the taking back control of destinies- in other words reclaiming the future possibilities.

2. The past as a blueprint for the future

> Here I will quote, and this will sound weird to you, the first president of Israel David Ben Gurion; 'A people without a past are a people without a future'...Why are we fighting? We are not fighting for nothing. We have something we are fighting for. And it's not just about the land, Palestine is a culture, a kitchen, a language…its everything. Its folklore, its music.…and it's this that we are fighting for (Ayed 2015).

Ayed's reference to Ben Gurion shows how much Zionism's founding father and first Prime Minister of Israel personifies the project as a whole. It is certainly no coincidence that Israel's main airport and the entry point for most tourists visiting Palestine is named 'Ben Gurion' International airport. The statement Ayed is referring to is yet to be sourced to Ben Gurion. However far from being redundant, this demonstrates his understanding of the goal of the Zionist project- to eliminate the Indigenous people from the historical record and to obscure any kind of future for them. Recent studies in the fields of psychology and neuroscience have demonstrated that memory of the past is important not only for individuals to connect to their past but also for their imaginings of the future. These studies have revealed that the cognitive and neural processes evoked when remembering past events are incredibly similar to those involved in imagining possible future ones (Schacter and Madore 2016, p.245). Cognitive time travel, or "episodic memory", allows for the

individual to re-experience something that happened in the past. It is this episodic memory that can be drawn upon to imagine future experiences:

> Imagining or simulating future events relies on many of the same cognitive and neural processes as remembering past events. According to the constructive episodic simulation hypothesis, such overlap indicates that both remembered past and imagined future events rely heavily on episodic memory: future simulations are built on retrieved details of specific past experiences that are recombined into novel events (Schacter and Madore 2016, p.245).

In this way, we can understand how eliminating the collective Palestinian historical narrative and memory of the past also helps to limit imaginations of future possibilities. Rather famously, the fourth Prime Minister of Israel Golda Meir stated that “There is no such thing as the Palestinian people… they did not exist”. More recently a book was released on Amazon entitled ‘History of the Palestinian People’, its 132 pages were left intentionally blank to imply that the Palestinians have no history (Voll 2017). Although the latter incident was a gimmick, the implications of denying the past of a collective group are serious. In addition to bolstering the hegemonic narrative and claim to the land by denying the existence of the ‘Other’, it also denies the foundations in which a collective can build on to imagine a future. Rosemary Sayigh writes of this “blacking out the future” in reference to the ongoing traumatic cycle of continuous Nakba. Sayigh explains that this continuing existence of being denied rights means that the “Nakba is ever newly present” (Sayigh 2013, p.56). When Palestinian futures are discussed within hegemonic spaces, usually it is within the very limited framework of the two-state solution. This framework marginalizes both the refugees and the Palestinian citizens of Israel who are more or less absent in discussions on a Palestinian state. The limitations of this future not

only lie in the absence of most of the Palestinian people, but also because it is still set within the settler colonial temporal and spatial borders.

So why is imagining important in contexts of colonialism and settler colonialism? Imagining a future beyond present realities is fundamentally tied to decolonization. Indeed Fanon argued that "it's no longer a question of knowing the world, but of transforming it" (Fanon 1967, p.1). This move from knowing to transforming is important because of the settler colonial state's ability to control perceptions of reality which bind Indigenous and colonized people in a seemingly perpetual state of being- a normalized stasis. It is this façade of permanency which is common to all colonial and settler colonial projects that sets the future within colonial borders. Writing about the case of French colonialism in Algeria, Fanon wrote that it "always developed on the assumption that it would last forever." He went on to explain that "the structures built, the port facilities, the airdromes, the prohibition of the Arab language" all gave the impression of a rupture in the colonial time impossible. Indeed "every manifestation of the French presence expressed a continuous rooting in time and in the Algerian future, and could always be read as a token of an indefinite oppression" (Fanon 1965, p.179-180). As we know from chapter three, the imposition of colonial time on Indigenous and native societies was and is a manifestation of "absolute domination" (Gallois 2016, p.252). Thus an imagined future based on memories of Palestine and reinforced by commemorations, challenge a reality that the Zionist state deems irreversible.

Similarly, writing in the context of settler colonialism in the US and Canada (Turtle Island), Waziyatawin explains how life beyond colonialism is especially difficult to perceive in the context of the "world's greatest and last superpower" (Waziyatawin 2012, p.76). For Palestinians, it is also difficult to imagine (but not impossible as we

shall see) a future in which the continuous Nakba is not feature of daily life. Indeed here we can draw upon Fanon's analysis of the eternity of the colonial situation as perceived by the colonial power. In the case of Palestine, it is particularly difficult to conceive of a realistic future in which the Palestinian refugees are allowed to return home and Palestinians are given full rights in their historic homeland. Waziyatawin's call to Indigenous people to think beyond the spatial and temporal confines speaks to this difficulty:

> As Indigenous Peoples, it is essential that we understand the direness of the global situation, recognize the fallacy of industrial civilization's invulnerability, and begin to imagine a future beyond empire and beyond the colonial nation-states that have kept us subjugated (Waziyatawin 2012, p.77).

Thinking "beyond empire" for Palestinians means thinking beyond the hegemonic concept and definition of what and where is Palestine and who is Palestinian. Ayed's reflections at the beginning of this section emphasizes that Palestine must be understood beyond its territorial meaning; "a culture, a kitchen, a language… Its folklore, its music…" Expanding the understanding of Palestine leaves space for imagination and it is this struggle that insists on reversing the colonial situation that constitutes as Indigenous resistance.

Arjun Appadurai describes imagination as "an organized field of social practices, a form of work… and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility." In other words, imagination is an amalgamation of individualized and socialized perceptions of what is possible (Appadurai 1996, p.31). This collective imagining of the future is important among Indigenous communities because decolonization itself cannot be individual, it has to occur on a

collective level. Appadurai discusses the collectivity of imagination when he importantly distinguishes it from fantasy:

> The idea of fantasy carries with it the inescapable connotation of thought divorced from projects and actions, and it also has a private, even individualistic sound about it. The imagination, on the other hand, has a projective sense about it, the sense of being a prelude to some sort of expression, whether aesthetic or otherwise. Fantasy can dissipate (because its logic is so often autotelic), but the imagination, especially when collective, can become the fuel for action. It is the imagination, in its collective forms, that creates ideas of neighborhood and nationhood, of moral economies and unjust rule, of higher wages and foreign labor prospects. The imagination is today a staging ground for action, and not only for escape (Appadurai 1996, p.7).

This crucial distinction places imagination beyond the abstract (fantasy) and in the realm of possibility and action, particularly in the case of collective imagining. Thus collective blueprints of the future which retrieved details of the past must be understood as a process which combines memory and desire and in which the past cannot be separated from the future. Raef Zreik emphasizes that “a dream cannot be achieved through reducing memory”. He goes on to explain that “there is no image for the future if the past does not show up in the present” (Zreik 2007, p.210).

3. Recreating the past

Palestinians have been utilizing oral history to recreate their past in various different ways over the decades. One of the better known ways is through the use of memorial books which scholar Susan Slyomovics has shed light on. Memorial books are a genre of past recreation and have been used by various communities who have

suffered displacement and tragedy including Jewish communities in European, the Armenians and Bosnians. Indeed Slyomovics explains that “memorial book production is generally thought to emerge after destruction is complete because it is a genre hitherto tied to the notion of time elapsed-only then can memory and reflection overcome the trauma of living the past in order to write it” (Slyomovics 1998, p.2). In ‘*Palestinian Village Histories: Geographies of the Displaced*’ Rochelle Davis builds on this research and focuses on village memorial books which have been collated by Palestinian refugees in the diaspora. Recreating the pre-1948 villages in historic Palestine, these books capture not only geographic details of the village, but also the lived experiences of those who lived there. More than simply descriptive writing, they contain stories, maps, photographs and family trees (Davis 2011, p.29). Using oral history as the main source, Davis argues that compared to “metanarratives of modern Palestinian history” the books provide details of local everyday life that is textured and layered (Davis 2011, p.57). She does however note that almost always the authors of these memorial books are first generation male Nakba survivors and thus the narratives in these books assume a patriarchal hegemony.

Independent projects like this are particularly instrumental in fragmented and de-territorialized communities such as the Palestinian one. Even more so when these fragments lack unified institutions which can represent them both culturally and politically. In the 1948 Territory, civil society as the main arena for meeting the cultural and political needs of Palestinians has been involved in various projects to recreate the past and strengthen their historical narrative.

One such project that I came across during my research in the Galilee is the newly established “Hadara” (civilization or culture), which describes itself as a “Palestinian project for recreating archetypal models of the village and homeland” in its booklet.

This pioneering project is in its early stages with its workshop in the village of Kabul. It was established by a group of NGO's and organisations who were looking for a way to develop and strengthen the Palestinian narrative, particularly amongst school age children. At this stage Hadara is creating an archetypal pre-1948 model Palestinian village, with the aim to get these models in most of the Arab schools in the country. I was told by the project leaders during a trip to their workshop that they later hope to create replicas of both the destroyed villages and the existing villages in their pre-48 state. The models are based on a generalized image of the Palestinian village, which according to the founders was created after consultation with people from the first Nakba generation who shared their memories of the Palestinian village landscape, as well as historians and architects. The indication was that it was a collaborative work between "professionals" and those who had lived experience of these villages. I was shown models of the villages at each stage of the design and building process, before being shown a final model in the local primary state school.

The model is one meter and a half by half a meter and is kept in a glass casing. In a nod to inclusivity, the model includes both a church and a mosque in addition to the other typical features of rural villages at the time such as houses, a well and fields. There are also models of people, showing the typical roles found in a Palestinian village during the 30s and 40s. Interestingly, I noticed that the female models all had head scarves on. When I pointed this out to the project leaders, questioning the historical accuracy of this, they defensively argued that they were peasant/ farmer scarves rather than Islamic hijabs. The models are a very simplistic representation of Palestinian life before the Nakba, the emphasis is on the rural and nostalgia for the life of the *falaheen* is obviously a strong driving force behind this project. As discussed in chapter three, nostalgia is the work of memory, where recollections of the past are

selected to suit the needs of the present. Nostalgic imagination of the past is thus a manifestation of both memory and desire. Hadara are using nostalgia to resist the negation and erasure of the Palestinian past and in particularly the erasure of the Palestinian village.

Figure 11.

The way in which this project markets itself reveals the dichotomy that characterizes Palestinian life within the State of Israel. The brochure of the project distinctly calls itself *mashrou falasteeni* (a Palestinian project). And yet unsurprisingly the plaque on the model in the school in Kabul states that it is a project for the recreation of the traditional Arab village. When asked about this, the project leaders explained that the only way to get the model into an Israeli state school was to emphasize the

"traditional" aspect and of course to omit any utterance of "Palestinian" and replace it with a more generic "Arab village".[28]

In addition to the obvious hostility to Palestinian-ness, common to many settler colonial projects such as Israel, is that they over emphasise the rural aspect of Indigenous societies, and memories of the agricultural lifestyle and the 'traditional' are twisted into the feudal and the backwards. This way they can claim civilization for themselves, and simultaneously negate the idea of a cosmopolitan Palestinian society before 1948. Thus the model of the "traditional Arab village" was allowed to be showcased in an Israeli Arab state school. In this way the Hadara project could be problematic and result in enforcing the settler narrative through this nostalgic recreation of the "Arab" village.

Figure 12.

[28] See work on Israeli control of Arab school curriculums by Majd al Haj (2012) and Nurit Peled Elhanan (2008).

On the other hand, there is potential that the project strengthens the Palestinian narrative through this physical recreation of the past. It depends on the narrative that is told to the school children about the village, which importantly must reiterate that the model is a Palestinian village and that there were over 500 villages that all differed in in various ways from each other but collectively made up the Palestinian village landscape. Additionally, specificity is important, thus the real strength in harnessing nostalgia will be with the recreation of actual villages, rather than the current homogenization of an archetypal Arab village. For example taking the destroyed village of Kabri and recreating what it looked like to show that it existed beyond its current state of ruins, whether it's an accurate representation or a romanticisation of the village is not so important. Claiming its existence as distinct yet part of the collective is significant as it counters the settler colonial narrative of backward peasants with no social connection to each other. In other words it counters the total negation of Palestine.

When thinking of models of the past more generally, what springs to mind are the 'ethnographic' or 'anthropologic' exhibitions in western museums in which native or Indigenous societies are displayed in a crude and essentialist manner. During my fieldwork I also visited the 'Ethnographic Centre of Acre and the Galilee', an Israeli ethnographic museum situated in the former Ottoman Garrison of Acca. According to the official website, the museum houses a "collection of artifacts depicting the life of the varied people (Jews, Christians, Muslims, Druze, Bedouins, Circassians and Bahai's) in the Galilee during the 19th and 20th centuries" (Israel Attractions 2017). The exhibition displays models of characters such as blacksmiths, carpenters etc. in their work environment with no reference to who they were apart from their profession. Rather than attempt at telling a narrative, the museum essentializes pre-

Zionist history as homogenous and disconnected from any notion of Palestine or Palestinian. The non-distinct native/ Indigenous person is a feature of many western museums, where difference and complex historical existence is claimed for themselves. Although *Hadara* does not claim to do so, disrupting and even rejecting the settler colonial narrative is rooted in "anti-colonial consciousness" (Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury 2007, p.421).

4. Manifestos and visions for the future

> One of the strategies which Indigenous peoples have employed effectively to bind people together politically is a strategy which asks that people imagine a future, that they rise above present day situations which are generally depressing, dream a new dream and set a new vision (Smith 2016, p.152).

Smith identifies the strategy of imagining a future as one of many projects currently being pursued by various Indigenous communities working on the development of a resurgent Indigenous research agenda. This strategy, which Smith identifies as "Envisioning", challenges the depressing present and looks to the future as a way in which to mobilise Indigenous people. It transcends the confines of possibility and time set by the settler state by envisioning a process of decolonization for the near future. In Canada, one such initiative was taken by the Leap Manifesto which was inspired by Indigenous struggles but published as a collective effort between them and environmental and social justice groups. It states the following:

> This leap must begin by respecting the inherent rights and title of the original caretakers of this land. Indigenous communities have been at the forefront of protecting rivers, coasts, forests and lands from out-of-control industrial activity. We

> can bolster this role, and reset our relationship, by fully implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Leap Manifesto 2017).

In a more radical document, the Black Lives Matter Movement also released a manifesto of an imagined future. The document details in depth the needed policy change for a future that sees an end to "anti-Black racism, human-made climate change, war, and exploitation". It also recognizes and honors "the rights and struggle of… (their) Indigenous family for land and self-determination" (The Movement for Black Lives 2017). Both these manifestos are the product of global grassroots political organizing from marginalized and oppressed groups in society. They draw upon imaginations of the future, irrespective of the limitations set by top down politics and transforms them into real policy proposals.

Ten years ago, a similar manifesto or vision for the future was articulated by Palestinians which was given little attention in both the media and the academy[29]. Yet, they demonstrated an unprecedented collective articulation of the political and social aspirations of the Palestinian citizens of Israel. The documents constitute of the '*The Future Vision Document*', '*An Equal Constitution for All*', '*The Democratic Constitution*' and '*The Haifa Declaration*', collectively known as the Future Vision Documents (hereafter the FVDs). They were published between 2006-2007 and were produced as a collaborative effort by Palestinian politicians, intellectuals and civil society leaders in the 1948 Territory. This last decade has marked a general transformation of the Palestinians in the 1948 Territory:

> The community has transformed itself into a strong national group that can shift its agenda from struggling against the everyday challenges of settler-colonial policies to

[29] See Amal Jamal (2008b) and Dov Waxman (Waxman 2013).

> attending to larger political and existential questions (Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury 2017, p.413).

These documents not only lay out the social and political demands of the Palestinian community in Israel addressing these existential questions, they also put forward a concise Palestinian narrative. The result was a theoretical and structured framework for Palestinian rights within the State of Israel. The documents call upon the State of Israel to abandon its Jewish character and to embrace all its citizens. At the same time, the documents assert the community's national Palestinian identity and affiliation with the Arab world and their Indigenous status. The 'Future Vision Document' begins with the following statement:

> We are the Palestinian Arabs in Israel, the indigenous peoples, the residents of the States of Israel, and an integral part of the Palestinian People and the Arab and Muslim and human Nation (The Future Vision 2006, p.5).

The 'An Equal Constitution for All' similarly affirms the Indigeneity of the Palestinians and explains further:

> The Arab minority is not just another weakened minority in Israeli society. This is the indigenous, original Arab-Palestinian population, living in its homeland even before the State was established…The indigeneity of the Arab population, therefore, is an integral part of the way in which it experiences its situation in Israel (An Equal Constitution for All 2007, p.18-19).

The affirmation that indigeneity is integral to the Arab Palestinian experience vis a vis Israel is accompanied with a clear articulation of Palestinian national identity and support of Palestinian liberation through self-determination (Haifa Declaration

2007p.17). The authors of the documents appear to find no tension between Indigeneity and Palestinian nationalism.

The historical narrative in the documents is clear and centers on the Nakba as the central temporal reference and the root of Palestinian discontent. There are also clear and articulate descriptions of the genesis of the Zionist settler colonial project in Palestine:

> Towards the end of the 19th century, the Zionist movement initiated its colonial-settler project in Palestine. Subsequently, in concert with world imperialism and with the collusion of the Arab reactionary powers, it succeeded in carrying out its project, which aimed at occupying our homeland and transforming it into a state for the Jews (Haifa Declaration 2007, p.11-12).

> Israel is the outcome of a settlement process initiated by the Zionist-Jewish elite in Europe and the West and realized by Colonial countries contributing to it and by promoting Jewish immigration to Palestine, in light of the results of the Second World War and the Holocaust (The Future Vision Document 2007, p.9).

The reaffirmation of the Palestinian historical narrative within a framework of Indigeneity and settler colonial invasion at the beginning of the FVDs is important context for the visions set out. This narrative not only demands historical redress for the injustice of the Nakba, but also addressing the continued injustices that are committed against the Palestinians across the Green Line. The 'Haifa Declaration' and 'The Democratic Constitution' document, explicitly demands that Israel recognizes "the right of return of the Palestinian refugees based on UN Resolution 194" (The Democratic Constitution 2007, p.4). Whilst there is in depth discussion about how institutionalized racism within the State of Israel should be tackled, there is no further discussion into how return of the refugees will be facilitated. The other

two documents only address the issue of the *muhajareen*. This is the most striking limitation of the FVDs in their contribution to any kind of future decolonisation process.

The FVD's did not present new ideas, rather they consolidated what the Palestinian intelligentsia, civil society and leading political figures have been calling for, for decades. However, this was the first time these ideas were being put forward in such a clear way and with a clear vision of what they imagined for the future. Jamal describes the documents as the "practical translation of these ideas into coherent ideas" (Jamal 2008b, p.7). They also demonstrate the deep involvement of civil society in collective Palestinian life within the Israeli State (Jamal, 2008a, p.284). Since their publication, however, there has been little "action" on the ground. It is not unsurprising that the current right-wing Israeli government has not addressed the documents nor taken any demands seriously. However, the documents have also had limited engagement from Palestinians both in the 1948 Territory and elsewhere. I discussed this with the director of the NGO Baladna, Nadim, who has had an extensive career in Palestinian civil society. He explained:

> They (the FVD's) are a theoretical and a political framework. But unfortunately, they have not directly influenced the daily work. It is something that is there and we all mostly believe in it… But it is not translated into practical projects or implementations and stuff like this. My feeling is because of donor pressure and different pressures... And NGO's are turning more and more towards professionalism and away from politicization (Nadim 2015).

Nadim's pessimism is in the context of increasing restrictions and limitations placed on Palestinian civil society. The 2011 "Foreign Government Funding Law" was a tactic used to discourage foreign government funding of Palestinian NGOs, in particular human rights NGOs. Adalah explains:

> (the law)…imposes invasive reporting requirements on NGOs, requiring them to submit and publish quarterly reports on any funding received from foreign governments or publicly-funded foreign donors, including information on any oral or written undertakings made to the funders. These details must also be published on the websites of the NGOs themselves, the Ministry of Justice, and the Registrar of Associations (Adalah 2017).

Limitations like this from the Israeli State on Palestinian civil society severely restrict political activities and thus translating any aspect of the FVDs into action on the ground is challenging.

The FVDs face value assume a discourse of redress and reform through the system. However, the radical nature of what they are demanding is revealed in their calls for Israel to abandon its self-definition as a Jewish State and for it to become a democratic state for all of its citizens, whilst simultaneously calling for the recognition of the collective rights of the Palestinians. In other words they are refusing the legitimacy of Zionism as the ideological foundation of the state and although it is not explicitly said in so many words, they are also suggesting a process of decolonization as their vision for the future. Their imagination of the future is laid out both practically and coherently and answer Waziyatawin's call to Indigenous people to think beyond the spatial and temporal confines.

5. Conceptualizing the future

Palestinians from all the fragments of Palestinian society have been engaging with organised grassroots imaginings of the future in various different ways. Usually these are heavily centered around the right of the return of the Palestinian refugees, regardless of whether they themselves are refugees. Indeed, the afore mentioned

work of Salman Abu Sitta demonstrates the feasibility of return cartographically and shows that there is enough land for all the returning refugees as well as Israeli citizens. His approach is empirically spatial and demographic. Another Palestinian lead project which looks to the future is the Decolonising Architecture Art Residency (DAAR) based in Beit Sahour, Bethlehem. A collaboration between "locals and internationals, and between artists and architects" the project looks at decolonization in the West Bank and Gaza from an architectural perspective, imagining the dismantling of the settlements and the return of the land to the Palestinians (Hilal, Petti and Weizman 2014, p.189). They too focus on return and argue that "return and decolonization are entangled concepts- we cannot think about return without decolonization, just as we cannot think about decolonization without return" (Hilal, Petti and Weizman 2014, p.39). In their work they reject the postponing of imagining the future, as the hegemonic political discourse demands. In their work they hope that architecture becomes intertwined in the collective cultural imagination of the future. Although their work is limited to the 1967 borders (more specifically the West Bank and Gaza) for reasons of focus, they do not limit themselves ideologically to the geographical limitations of the 'Occupied Palestinian Territories' rather they understand Palestine in its historic entirety.

During my fieldwork, I focused on a project of envisioning/ imagining in the Galilee which is led by several different NGO's; Baladna, the Arab Association for Human Rights, ADRID and Zochrot. The project is called 'Udna' (our return) and seeks to engage with young adults on conceptualizing future visions particularly within a framework of the right of return and engaging with the social-political aspects of Palestine in a post right of return world. Established as a political education project in 2012, Udna works in Haifa and around the Galilee with young adults. The project

educates the *shabab* (young adults) on life in Palestine before the Nakba and imagines not only return of the refugees and *muhajareen* to the destroyed villages but also their reconstruction. The reconstruction is premised on the right of return of the refugees and their descendants[30] and the models themselves are either physical models or digital visualizations. The project predominantly engages with *muhajareen* but also welcomes participants who are not and want to learn more about the Nakba and the possibilities for return. Indeed during one of the workshops, one of the participants who presented the model of the destroyed village of al-Birweh explained that she was not from the village, but it did not matter because the Palestinian people are part of one *duwla* (nation).

The first stage of the Udna program is organized visits to destroyed villages. It is here where the *shabab* learn about the history of the locality through oral testimonies from village descendants and the project leaders. Unlike those in the West Bank, Gaza and in the diaspora who have to reconstruct Palestine at a distance, Palestinians inside the 1948 borders can do so, on the land of historic Palestine. Indeed, on the Udna visits, *shabab* are taken to see what remains of the destroyed villages and how the land looks today. The visit leader gives them an idea of what the village and the surrounding area used to look like before 1948 and the situation of the land in the present-day Israeli State. Whilst attending these trips, I noticed that rather than a one-way transfer of knowledge, the tour leaders would encourage an engaging discussion in which the *shabab* were also able to share any stories or memories they have of the area. The importance of being on the land whilst reconstructing these historical narratives was evident in the way that the *shabab* were engaging with the visit. They

[30] UNRWA grants refugee status to descendants of male refugees; https://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees

were walking around, talking to each other, touching the plants, house ruins etc. Israeli anthropologist Efrat Ben Ze'ev has written about the importance of the senses in creating a historical narrative on return visits such as these. Drawing from Proust, she writes that return becomes a sensual experience "assisting in the retrieval of memories through embodiment" (Ben Ze'ev 2004, p.155).

The day after visiting a destroyed village, Udna organizes a workshop in which the *shabab* are divided into groups and are tasked with drawing a map of what the village could look like now if the right of return was given to the refugees both inside and outside of historic Palestine. In addition to the map, they are asked to conceptualize a detailed plan about infrastructure, industry and social aspects of the community. In one of the workshops I attended, following a visit to the destroyed village of Ma'lul, many participants drew upon a romantic rural memory of Palestine in order to imagine and reconstruct the future village. They talked about agricultural cooperatives, where the villagers would all have an equal stake in the land, self-sufficiency and religious harmony.

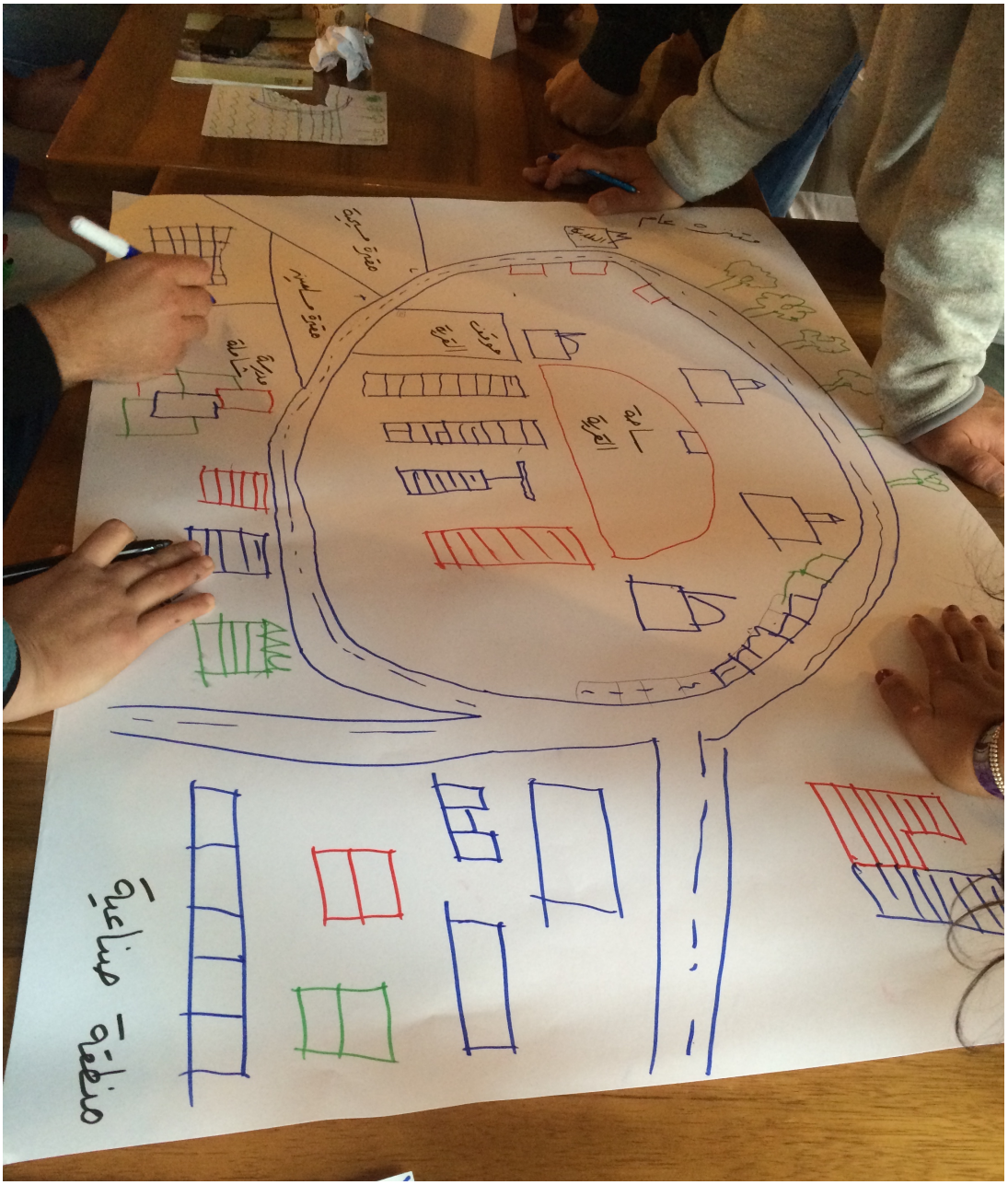

Figure 13.

Speaking to Nadim, he explained that the project is an important tool in going beyond the stalemate of return as a scared concept limited to political rhetoric only:

> The return narrative is moving to a new phase where people visualize and think about it in practical terms. Before, the strategy or the common narrative was to say that return was something sacred, and you wouldn't hear anything more about it…To say it is practical, it is doable, it is possible…to take all of the considerations and changes and to still respect the sacredness of the right of return… I think it is very empowering because it takes people from one place where it was a holy concept and nothing more, to another where they can say yes maybe return is possible…even for the more sceptical people (Nadim 2015).

Nadim explains a paralysis that comes with discussing return in political discourse. Return has been eliminated as a possibility by the Palestinian political leadership in the West Bank, who ascribe to the parameters set by the international peace process which disregards the right of return for the Palestinian refugees. To talk about return in a very real and practical way breaks the confines of possibility set by the dominant power structures. In this way, Udna fits in very well with Smith's description of Indigenous "Envisioning" projects. Pushing past the barriers set by the international discourse on solutions for Palestine/Israel, Udna demands that the *shabbab* imagine a world in which the return becomes reality and that they prepare conceptually for such a world. The imagining itself does not have to be feasible or practical, but the simple act of imagining such a world is a defiant act of refusal.

The project is perhaps best summarized in the words of the project coordinator, Noora:

> Today we are working for the future and we are working under the premise that we are returning and the right of return will be actualized. And when we return there are

> many things that we need to do. For example, now the numbers of descendants of the villages are more than ten times what they were. You know, I am from the third generation of the Nakba but I also want to return. We also are including all the refugees outside of the country. So we are working on a plan of return but also looking at how they (the refugees) want to return (Noora 2015).

Firstly Noora explains that the project takes for granted that return will happen in the future. In this way, *Udna* is able to avoid the previously mentioned stalemate on the right of return thus superseding temporal constraints of the Nakba cycle. The taking for granted of the right of return also highlights the importance of the inclusion of the refugees outside of the borders of historic Palestine in the imagined future, which Noora emphasizes. She continued:

> We are also opening the conversation about how we want to deal with the people who may have settled the land. Will we deal with them in the same way they dealt with us? Another thing to look at is how originally the villages lived off the land or those on the coast would live off the sea. So now things are different and will be different with return. What about education? Industry? So we encourage them to think about these things so that when we do return we are ready and prepared (Noora 2015).

Noora outlines the questions that shape the discussions in the workshop sessions. She begins with an important one which addresses the fate of the settlers themselves. One participant replied with “we will not deal with them the same way they dealt with us. We will not create another Nakba”. The other questions on the social and economic aspects of the reconstructed villages allow the *shabab* to engage in very real and practical discussions.

On one of the Udna trips, we visited the destroyed village of Ma’lul in the Upper-eastern Galilee. Most of the village land is sealed off for “military purposes” with

barbed wire and fences marking these areas. Rather unusually, along one of the fences were several guard dogs stationed about ten meters apart. In order to walk up the main path to the center of the destroyed village, one has to walk alongside this fence with the dogs barking on the other side. It was a rather stark reminder of who controlled the land and the omnipresence of the Israeli State. In Ma'lul, as in most destroyed villages, there are set limitations on what the descendants of the village are allowed to do on the land. For example, they are only allowed to hold mass once a year in only one of the surviving churches. In addition they are forbidden from restoring the cemetery and the mosque.

Figure 14.

After the trips and workshops, the *shabab* divided into their village groups and created physical models or computer visualizations of these future villages using the

knowledge they gained from the fieldtrip including oral testimonies. These models would be presented to the rest of the project participants and a public audience at an event later that year.

6. Showcasing the return

Towards the end of the year *Udna* organized a showcasing of the village reconstructions in Nazareth. The event was open to the public, although the attendees mostly consisted of the project participants and their friends and family. Each village group was invited to present reconstructions of their destroyed village. I have selected three villages below to discuss in depth their presentations.

- Al Ghabsiyya

Ghabsiyya is a destroyed Palestinian village 11 km north-east of Acca on the coast. One of the youth's from the Ghabsiyya group began the presentation with the following introduction to the village;

> Ghabsiyya is on the sea, it was cleansed on 20th April 1948. It was a big village. In 1948 a village elder went to raise a white flag on the mosque but he was shot dead. In 1951 the high court passed a ruling that the villages could return but it was overruled by the military court who declared it a closed area. All that remains is a mosque and a cemetery. Many people from Ghabsiyya now live in Sheikh Danoun. Actually about half the people in Sheikh Danoun are from Ghabsiyya. The others went to live in al-Mazra'a (Al Ghabsiyya group 2015)[31].

In 1948, it is estimated that the village was home to nearly 1500 residents before it was depopulated. The Palestine Remembered database estimated that the number

[31] I do not reference individual speakers for two reasons. Firstly because they took turns speaking during the presentation and secondly because these were collective presentations and reflective of the groups narrative as a whole.

of descendants of the village in 1998 were nearly 9,000 (Palestine Remembered 2017). Nearly all of the expelled residents remained within the borders of the new state and became Israeli citizens. Following this introduction, the group showed their reconstruction of the village which was created through a computer visualization and presented through a youtube video. The video begins with an aerial map of the village pre 1948 which fades immediately to the visualization. This superimposition of the past village and the future village, skipping the present reality of a destroyed village was perhaps not intentional but demonstrated well the idea that this village had a past and therefore can have a future despite the fact that it remains lifeless in the present.

In the reconstructed village, the buildings have modern elements but are made of traditional pale limestone and retain some classical features of common Palestinian architecture that would have been used in the pre-1948 village. There are communal spaces with walkways, cafes and water features. Some of the ruins of the old village are encased behind glass in the middle of the communal spaces emphasizing the need to memorialize the pre-1948 village. Not surprising is the fact that these spaces look similar to Israeli re-developments of depopulated Palestinian spaces in cities, such as that in Jerusalem's 'Jewish Quarter' or the Mamilla Shopping mall built on top of the Palestinian West Jerusalem neighbourhood of Mamilla. Many of these modern Israeli developments attempt to retain an air of 'authenticity' and use similar stones and masonry that were used before the state's creation. As with elsewhere in Israel, elements of Palestine are incorporated into modern day Israel in an attempt to indigenize the settler society.

Figure 15.

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Figure 16.

- Al Birweh

Al Birweh is a village ten kilometers east of Acca. It was depopulated of its nearly 1700 inhabitants in June 1948 (Palestine Remembered 2017). The village is perhaps best known as Mahmoud Darwish's village of origin. This plays a hugely significant role in the narrative of the village as we shall see shortly. One of the *shabab* from the Al Birweh group explained their conceptualization:

> Rather than make a film or a computer visualization we decided to imagine the village through a model reconstruction. We looked at how we would build a model that would show what we wanted return to look like. So the reconstruction focused mostly on cultural things that we would build in the village. We also wanted to focus on the history on the village and what was in the village before… (Al Birweh group 2015)

The last statement shows the significance of the history of the village in the building of the reconstructed village model. They also went on to emphasize their understanding of the Zionist project as one that wants the post-Nakba generations to forget their historical narrative and the Palestinian landscape:

> This project looked at how we could rebuild Al Birweh from scratch. Al Birweh suffered from an ethnic cleansing that aimed at making the next generation not know what was in Al Birweh and how it was. So we spoke to the older generation of people who lived in Al Birweh. We sat with them, spoke to them and made a plan so we could do this reconstruction. We found out where everything was, where the mosque was, where the church was…and we did this plan with the help of an architect. Of course they destroyed everything, the school, the mosque, the cemetery, everything so people wouldn't know what was there. So this reconstruction was done for the coming generation… (Al Birweh group 2015)

They also explain how they gathered information of the past from the "older generation" in order to proceed with their reconstruction, highlighting again the importance attributed to collecting information from the Nakba generation before they pass away. The reconstruction of the village is based on both how it used to be before 1948 but also on how it should be in the near future with the return of the refugees. Darwish's significance was highlighted in the following part of the presentation:

> We will use the remaining stones of the destroyed mosque and church to rebuild them. The cemetery will be re-built how it was. Of course this reconstruction doesn't show everything in Al Birweh. Firstly this reconstruction is a simple one. But the most important thing that we added (to the model) is that there is a museum that commemorates the past and emphasizes the fact that Mahmoud Darwish was from this village. So it will be a Mahmoud Darwish museum. It will include music, art, everything cultural (Al Birweh group 2015).

The memorialization of Darwish as a local hero seems to play a major role in this reconstruction and indeed the *shabab* created a museum not just to "commemorate" the village's history but also to remind people of their famous compatriot. Darwish himself wrote about Al Birweh many times and encapsulated a return visit he made in a poem entitled '*Standing before the ruins of Al Birweh'*. The following excerpt describes how Darwish still see's Al Birweh despite the "modern" settler colonial structure on top of the ruins of the village:

> Do you see that dairy factory behind that strong pine tree?
>
> I say: No, I only see the gazelle at the window
>
> He says: What about the modern roads on the rubble of houses?
>
> I say: No, I don't see them

I only see the garden under them (Antoon 2011).

Figure 17.

Mi'ar is a depopulated village located 17 kilometers southeast of Acca. It's population in 1948 was approximately 890 inhabitants, but estimates in 1998 for the number of descendants of the village reached 5500 people. The Mi'ar youth group wonderfully described their conversations during the project;

> We spoke about a lot of things in the meetings. We spoke about the right of return, the occupation, us as a minority here. What we get and what we don't get. Sometimes we would sit for hours and think how far have we come? What can our generation do? We are the generation of hope, the generation that can implement change (Mi'ar Group 2015).

This excerpt from their presentation shows that the *Udna* project created an atmosphere of hope and excitement. *Udna* also instilled in the *shabab* the importance of oral testimonies particularly from the 'Nakba generation';

> It was asked (by Baladna) that we should imagine our return, how would we see it…so firstly we decided to organise a visit. We invited most of the descendants of the village and in particular the older generations that lived in Mi'ar, the original inhabitants. We managed to gather quite a few people from the older generation those in their 70s and some in their 50s....We decided on a date and we went to the village, we walked on the land and we listened to them. And it was important for us to listen to them because they are our only hope left, they are the hope. We know everything about Mi'ar from them (Mi'ar Group 2015).

The group explained that as they took part in the project the year before and created a computerized reconstruction of the village, this year they wanted to bring Mi'ar to life in another way:

> As the project fell during Ramadan we decided we wanted to organize an Iftar because that's around the time the village was cleansed in 1948. So we made a public invitation to all the people of the village for a date in Ramadan. Mi'ar now is a wilderness, there is no life there, who will usually go there in Ramadan? We got there and there was no one, no life. So we wanted to transform the land from a dead land with no life with no one there, to a land with life. We asked the mothers to help us cook traditional food. We brought chairs, tables, lights… and we brought a film to show. We sat, ate, chatted, enjoyed ourselves, shared our memories, and we showed the older generation that we can do something. We are not just the generation of Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. We are not a generation with nothing in our hands, we have in our hands something. Maybe even more than our parents and grandparents…Not everything starts big, things have to start small and step by step.

> Tomorrow and the day after and the day after that we will continue to do these things (Mi'ar Group 2015).

Mi'ar was brought to life with the return of the villagers to the land. In this way the *shabab* were reconstructing what the village could be like once the right of return is enacted. Again, the importance of sharing memories on the land featured as an important part of the project.

At the time of this event (late 2015), the situation in Palestine was tumultuous. The 'third intifada' was taking place, where young Palestinian men and women, particularly in Jerusalem, were taking part in stabbing attacks mostly against Israeli soldiers and police officers. This is directly referred to by the Mi'ar group in their closing statement:

> We are not going to go out and fight with knives and injure people to show how much we love this land. There are a thousand ways to show this, it is enough to hold a small child and tell him about the Nakba and about the occupation. To explain to him that this land is stolen. It is enough to tell him that there is an occupation and it is your right to return and it is your right to try and return (Mi'ar group 2015).

7. Conclusion

> If the land becomes free and we return to the village, I imagine that all the families of the village will come back (Miral)… A line of Dabke will be formed from the entrance of the village to the church…(Maysaa)… the party, the food, the laughter. For us it will be a happiness which cannot be described (Miral)… It is a happiness which we are waiting for everyday (Maysaa).

The above is taken from one of Udna*'s* youtube videos, in which various participants were asked about what they envisage for return. Miral and Maysaa are third generation Nakba survivors who are active in the Iqrit youth group. Their envisioning of return is a collective and happy one full of ceremonial practice and encapsulates beautifully how this generation is daring to imagine a future. Both the projects *Hadara* and *Udna are* creating a space which allows Palestinians to take control and reclaim the imagination of their past and the imagination of their future. This circumvents the limitations on what is deemed possible and rejects the postponing of visions of the future. *Udna* therefore is a good example of Appadurai's collective imagining translated into action.

The conceptualization of the future within the Udna workshop*s* is centered around spatial return, indeed it is a project spearheaded by the *muhajareen* and focuses on the plight of their destroyed villages. However, this return is conceptualized within wider collective return of the Palestinian people. This was reflected not only in the discourse but also in the imagery used by the project. The poster for the Udna end of year showcase event on the facebook page included the now well-known photo of the 2011 Nakba Day march by Syrian Palestinian refugees (see picture below).

Figure 18.

The march was organized by various Palestinian groups in Syria and although was organized to commemorate the Nakba, the political articulations centered around the right of return (Al-Hardan 2016, p.7). Several hundred Syrian Palestinian refugees marched towards the border between Syria and the Israeli occupied town of Majd al Shams in the Golan Heights. As they approached closer, the people of Majd al Shams shouted at them to stop out of fear that they would be injured by mines. Taking no heed of the warnings, the marchers continued until they reached the fence and then proceeded to climb over it. The protestors were greeted by the villagers in Majd al Shams with emotional embraces and they were declared heroes. Indeed one of these proclaimed heroes who managed to make it over the fence travelled all the way to Jaffa. The young man, Hasan Hijazi, whose family were expelled from the city in 1948 wanted to make his return public and subsequently gave an interview on Israeli television before he was deported. Hijazi's return was symbolic, and he admitted as such during the interview. Although affirmative in his claim to the city, Hijazi's return was not as he imagined it:

> It's been my dream to come to Jaffa because it's my city. But I imagined that if I managed to do it, it would be with a march of a million people, like people were saying on Facebook (Abunimah 2011).

Hijazi emphasizes that his imagined return was on a collective level, not simply an individual one. The image of the march remains powerful in Palestinian collective memory and took place in an atmosphere of revolutionary possibilities ignited by the 'Arab Spring' which had begun one year previously. Indeed the chants of the demonstrators mirrored that of protestors who took part in the Arab Spring; "*Ash-sha'b yurid*…" (the people want) replacing "*isqat an-nizam*" (the downfall of the

regime) with “*tahreer falasteen*” (the liberation of Palestine). The Editor in Chief of Haaretz at the time wrote an article on the march in which he described the storming of the border fence a nightmare for Israel:

> The nightmare scenario Israel has feared since its inception became real - that Palestinian refugees would simply start walking from their camps toward the border and would try to exercise their "right of return (Haaretz 2011).

In highlighting the proximity of the refugees to their original homes but also the impermanent nature of the fence dividing the occupied Golan with the rest of Syria, the editor of Haaretz does indeed make return sound rather simple.

However, envisioning the future has not been limited to spatial return and the FVDs demonstrate that by setting out clear policy and structural changes that undermine the Zionist nature of the state and challenge settler colonial temporalities. The FVDs can therefore be read as the beginnings of a theoretical framework for decolonization. Indeed, imagining decolonisation within settler contexts is predominantly about the decolonisation of relationships. The FVDs clearly state the relational dynamics by stressing that Indigeneity is an essential component of the Palestinian experience and by reaffirming the Palestinian historical narrative within a framework of settler colonial invasion. Additionally, in demanding that the Israeli State abandon its exclusive Jewish character, the FVDs present a serious framework for a structuring of the relationship between settler and Indigenous. These initiatives, activities and documents are not part of a revolution but rather a process, indeed just as settler colonialism is a structure so too is the Indigenous resistance against it (Svirsky 2016).

Chapter 7

Conclusion

I began this thesis with the story of my great-grandmother Hamda, not only to emphasise the cyclical and continuous nature of the Nakba, but also to highlight the connection between myself and this research. Choosing the Galilee as one of my case studies was both a personal choice to look at the region from where my family originates, but also a scholarly one that seeks to fill a gap in the literature. Oral historian Alessandro Portelli made a similar choice to write about his home town of Terni in his book '*The Death of Luigi Trastulli and other stories: Form and meaning in Oral History' (1991).* In his introduction to the book, he admits that his own motivation for writing about Terni and oral history was as much scholarly as it was political. Oral history for Portelli, would enable him to pursue a bottom up approach to narrate the story of this particular struggle against fascism. Far from simply a justification for studying one's own home town, Portelli also provides a detailed analysis of oral history as a discipline and methodology, demonstrating that the oft cited limitations of oral history are actually strengths.

Oral history has often come up against historical narratives that are ascribed with more legitimacy than others, simply because they are in written form. These structures of power within knowledge production arenas have certainly been evident in the case of Palestine. For many decades, the scholarly literature produced followed the hegemonic Zionist discourse, in part because historical narratives are dominated by victors of war and political elites, but also because of the afore mentioned assumption that the written word holds more validity than the spoken word. Palestinian heavy reliance on oral history as a historical source of knowledge

was because of the destruction and looting in 1948 of material knowledge sources such as archives and libraries. Since then however, Palestinians and others have reproduced written knowledge on Palestine, rendering oral history no longer the 'emergency science' Nur Masalha ascribed it as.

In Palestine, there has been an acceleration in oral history works, both in their collation and archiving across the various fragmentations. Indeed, the remarkable Palestinian oral history archive at the American University of Beirut (AUB) has successfully archived, indexed and coded over 1000 hours of oral testimony from first generation Palestinians. This increased importance placed on oral history comes, in part, from a sense of urgency to collect and record oral testimony from the dying first generation of Palestinians who have eyewitness narratives of Palestine pre-1948. It also comes from understanding that oral history can serve to strengthen a counter narrative, not only to the Zionist hegemonic narrative but also to the narratives from Palestinian political elites which have silenced and over shadowed other Palestinians voices.

Focusing on Haifa and the Galilee, Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six explored in depth spaces, projects and activities which use memory to challenge both the epistemic and physical erasure of Palestine. What was illuminated by my fieldwork was the potentiality of oral history to resist certain structures of power. Elias Khoury's fear of a history with one version, described at the opening of this thesis, is found in the experience of many Indigenous, subaltern and colonized people who have had their narratives ignored and suppressed. Oral history, in the case of the Palestinians in the 1948 Territory, has played a central role in creating an increasing assertiveness. This assertiveness is theorised in this thesis as Indigenous

resistance, which in essence is resistance against erasure and continuous attempts at elimination.

Taking direction from scholars in the field of Palestine Studies, including Rana Barakat and Steven Salaita, this research has sought to add to the engagement with the concept of Palestinian Indigeneity and the discussion on including Palestine within the field of Indigenous Studies. I argue that Indigeneity is both an important and advantageous concept for Palestine Studies as it identifies the struggle accurately as one against settler colonialism, but furthermore, it elevates Palestinians to more than simply objects of a settler colonial structure but also agents and subjects of their own narratives.

Chapter Three explored the production and reproduction of these narratives based on oral testimonies and memories. The centrality of the 1948 Nakba to these narratives, as a rupture point in Palestinian time, is a defining characteristic. Indeed, 1948 is the temporal reference point that connects all Palestinians, whether living in exile as refugees, as nominal citizens of Israel or under military occupation in the 1967 territories. Abu-Lughod and Sa'adi call it a "demarcation line" (Abu-Lughod and Sa'adi 2007, p.3) in which Palestinians organise their memories and collective narratives retrospectively or prospectively around it. Of course, the 1948 Nakba preceded the birth of most Palestinians and thus 'memories' of pre-1948 Palestine and the Nakba itself are inherited and passed on, a process identified by Hirsch as 'post-memory' transmission. This intergenerational sharing and transmissions of memories serves as an important tool to connect with the past but also to navigate the hard reality of the present. When these memories are interwoven into commemorative events, the interconnection between past and present is heightened

revealing new spaces of agency, as was demonstrated with the case of *Yom Tarshiha*.

Chapter Four was an unexpected chapter in the process of writing of my thesis and the inclusion of Haifa only became evident at the writing up stage once I read through all the interviews and my notes from meetings, events and informal conversations. In Haifa, distinctly Palestinian space has developed since the Nakba despite the attempts to disguise the presence of Palestinians and their Palestinian identity through the use of a religious tolerance and diversity discourse. However, the remnants of this Indigenous urban community and memories of it are being used to reclaim Haifa as a Palestinian urban centre for cultural and knowledge production as it was prior to its de-Arabisation in 1948. The fact that many of Haifa's Palestinian residents originate from the Galilee means that this assertive politicised memory is also being expressed in the north where the rural village landscape is facing a similar struggle against erasure. This struggle is dominated by "return" activism in which oral history plays a central role and is addressed in Chapter Five.

Here, I revealed how activist groups are transcending temporal and spatial boundaries, by bringing the past alive at sites of destroyed villages. By 'returning' to these villages and in some cases maintaining a continuous presence, these activists are engaging in a form of spatial resistance that is memory orientated. Similarly, the annual March of Return serves to strengthen the narrative of the Palestinian community in the 1948 Territory by intertwining collective memories with placing Palestinian bodies on Palestinian land. This too is an act of spatial resistance, challenging the 'dead' and 'immobile' Palestinian village landscape by placing oral history at the centre whilst asserting itself as a form of land based resistance.

Chapter Six examined two projects which recreate the past and imagine future possibilities. This chapter revealed how the revival of the past in order to create a blue print for the future constitutes a significant act of Indigenous resistance and a potential pathway for decolonization. Both the projects *Hadara* and *Udna are* creating a space which allows Palestinians to take control and reclaim the imagination of their past and the imagination of their future. This circumvents the limitations on what is deemed possible and rejects the postponing of visions of the future. *Udna* therefore is a good example of Appadurai's collective imagining translated into action. As well as Waziyatawin's call to Indigenous people to think beyond the spatial and temporal confines. In addition to these two projects Chapter Six also looked at the FVDs, which were an unprecedented set of documents that presented a serious framework for a restructuring of the relationship between settler and Indigenous. The FVDs clearly state the relational dynamics by stressing that Indigeneity is an essential component of the Palestinian experience and by reaffirming the Palestinian historical narrative within a framework of settler colonial invasion.

Whilst the FVDs were compiled by intellectuals who engaged with the theoretical implications of settler colonialism and Indigeneity, the other people and activities mentioned in this thesis rarely used the terms settler colonialism and indigenous resistance. Yet, the present reality was consistently referred to as a*l Nakba al mustimirrah* and their struggle was framed as one in which to resist this continuous state of Nakba through a Foucaldian notion of "counter memory". The use of oral history in these spaces is part of a process which seeks to continue asserting Palestinian identity whilst at the same time creating space to remember the Palestinian past and imagine a Palestinian future.

The people and activities explored in this thesis are refusing to adhere to the demand to leave the past behind as bygones, a tactic often invoked by those in positions of power in peace process discourses around the world, particularly in contexts of colonialism and settler colonialism. Apologies for past crimes are often accompanied with the demand to forget and 'move forward'. In the case of settler state apologies to Indigenous people, they often neutralizes the historical narrative while simultaneously ignoring the ongoing oppressive relationship between the state and the indigenous people (Corntassel and Holder 2008). Outside of the settler colonial context, forgetting is sometimes deemed imperative to political transition as was seen in Spain with the *pacto del olvido* following the fall of Franco. Yet the past and the future cannot so easily be disentangled.

The work of Udna and others from my fieldwork highlight this inextricable link between the past and the future. This is also emphasised by Zreik who explains that the two are a necessary condition of each other:

> The attempt of searching for the future opens the doors for the past for you. The past, needs the future in the same way as the future needs the past. Memory does not live in itself and for itself. Memory lives in the contest of creating a dream. Thus the process of creating a dream becomes a necessary condition for our ability to maintain our memory (Zreik 2007,p.210).

As Zreik writes, dreaming (or imagining) is necessary in order to preserve our memory of the past. This research has shown that in some Palestinian spaces in the 1948 Territory this link between the past and the future is acknowledged and as a result there has been the development of a memory politics which is distinctly future orientated.

Finally, focusing on the case of the Palestinians in the 1948 Territory and more specifically in Haifa and the Galilee has illuminated and important aspect to their experience. As living conduits to indigeneity, they have retained a physical connection where other Palestinians have been prevented from doing so. Importantly their survival of the 1948 Nakba and their subsequent resolve to remain on the land is a reminder to the settler colonial regime that its project has not succeeded. This also reveals various frontiers and struggles over space that are particular to this community's experience. They live 'together' with Jewish Israelis and yet at the same time this together is very much apart and segregated. Space for Palestinians in the 1948 Territory is limited and restricted by the state in order to preserve the 'Jewish character' of the country. This space is also being used as a geopolitical tool to conquer and contain memories and narratives of Palestinians through destruction and de-Palestinization of the landscape.

However antithetical to the state's aims is that this attempt to exclude and segregate has allowed for an assertive Palestinian identity and narrative to develop without being assimilated into the settler structure. Activists and civil society actors are reviving memories of Palestine and developing the collective narrative in order to strengthen the connection Palestinians have with the land. This is creating new forms of political and cultural agency that attempts to reclaim the future and imagine what the Zionist State deems irreversible. In Chapter Four, I quoted an excerpt from Kanafani's short story '*Return to Haifa'*. In it, the main character Said's memories are awakened almost involuntarily by his physical return to the city from which he was expelled decades before. For me, Kanafani is suggesting that the very spaces where Palestine is being erased, can also be the place where it is remembered, revived and recreated.

This thesis thus, whilst recognising the importance of gathering and archiving oral testimonies, looked at what happens beyond this stage and aims to reveal the potentiality of oral history. The liberating and empowering potentiality for oral histories has been acknowledged by many including those working within Indigenous Studies. Sium and Ritskes refer to them as “decolonization theory in its most natural form” (Sium and Ritskes 2013, p.ii), acknowledging the way that they preserve indigenous ways of knowing against colonial erasure. Importantly, they break this idea of ‘forever’ and permanence to the indefinite oppression. It only seems apt that this thesis should end with the words of one my interviewees, Rana:

> The Israeli entity is afraid of the collective memory. They are afraid that this new generation is going to grow up on these values and these commemorations. They fear it. And it’s about time for them to fear. They should be afraid because they have done something wrong. The Zionists had a saying about the Palestinians that the elderly will die and the young will forget. We are proving the total opposite (Rana 2015).

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List of Interviews

Ayed 2015

Basel 2014

George 2015

Haitham 2015

Johnny 2016

Jeries 2015

Jumana 2015

Lubna 2014

Mana 2016

Maryam 2014

Mohammed 2016

Muna 2015

Nadim 2015

Nagham 2015

Nizar 2014

Noora 2015

Raed 2016

Rana 2015

Raneen 2014

Rasha 2015

Wassim 2014

Zein 2014

List of Organisations, Groups and Networks

ADRID

Arab Cultural Association

Baladna

Hadara

Hirak Haifa

Kayan Feminist Organisation

Mada Al Carmel

Shabab Iqrit

Shabab Kufr Bir'im

Shabab Tarshiha

Udna

Appendix

Sample Interview translated from Arabic into English

Rana

YH: So can you tell me where you are from and a bit about yourself?

R: I am from Tarshiha, in the Upper Galilee, north of Palestine. I am a visual artist. Visual art deals with many mediums like paintings, drawings, photography, sculpture, installation art etc. I practice this as my main profession. I also instruct art in many different places. I headed the art department at the Al Quds university for two years. I exhibit a lot in Palestine and abroad. Some in the Arab world and some in Europe and the US. I hold a MFA in art, I have a Masters in Fine Art. I am a Fullbright scholar…if that interests you. I have spent many years abroad including Switzerland. I travel to Europe, Paris and London…I also lived in the US for four years from 2001-2005 when I was studying for my Masters. Then I returned home in 2005 and since then I have been based here in Palestine; between the Galilee and Jerusalem. Of course I love being back home but it is very challenging and very exhausting. Especially being an artist and visual person…a very sensitive person. Its an added value but at the same time it is very exhausting. Sometimes I feel like I want to shut down.

YH: Can you tell me a bit about your family history?

R: Well yes. All of us were born in Tarshiha. Tarshiha has a long history of resistance and has a quite famous history. For example my great-grandfather and

my grandfather were all born in Tarshiha. They were born and raised in Tarshiha. We are now in a third generation of jewelry making and goldsmiths. So, we are a family of artists. My father, bless him, and my brothers are carrying on with this profession. We have been there for a while. In our days, we didn't own much of the land…The special thing about Tarshiha was that it was full of resistance. And the big thing is that they resisted for six more months. October 29th was the fall of the village. Because there was so much resistance the criminal Israeli air-force bombed us from the air. It was taking too long for them to occupy the village. There were many casualties from the village. The biggest casualty that happened was from the Hawari Family. They bombed the house and about 13 members of the family were killed. And one of them, Fatmi al Hawari, survived the air strike and she was still alive and a witness of the crime until three years ago when she died. But she was paralyzed in the bombing. It was a big tragedy that marked our village. Anyway my father was exiled in 1948 to Lebanon. I am so proud of my grandmother because she used to go back and forward- because we are right on the border she used to go back and forward to Lebanon with her children. When they were exiled she returned with them back home, she was really an iron woman. Defending herself, feeding her children, supporting them by all means. She was a widow. They returned in 1948, at the end of 1948. They were again exiled in 1952. My father always said they threw us at the border (*zitouna*). They loaded them on trucks and they drove them away from their home. They then exiled them to Lebanon. Yet again my grandmother was a good reason for them to come back. She went fighting for her children to take them back home.

YH: Who was exiled?

R: My father and his two brothers and some of his sisters. But both my grandfather and my grandmother they stayed in the village. And that's why it was a good reason for them to claim family reunification. There were about 160 families exiled from Tarshiha…It was a big town considering its surroundings in 1948. Something very interesting you should take into consideration and think about is who was exiled not allowed to return. As far as I hear from the elderly in the village, they said that mostly the landowners and those who were wealth off and had the property, these ones were not allowed to come back. And since we are a mixed village of Christians and

Muslims, they claim that many of those who returned were Christians and the Muslims didn't- also because they were the landowners. Since then we have lost so much land from the village that was taken by four settlements built on top of our land. Ma'a lot, Kfar Avradim, Meona and also Amin... But my father for sure was one of the people who was fighting for the village and resisting during 1948. So I am so proud of him. If it weren't for him and my grandmother's resistance and fighting for the return of her children we could have ended up in a refugee camp in Syria or Lebanon.

YH: There are so many stories where woman play such a key role in narratives.

R: Women play a strong role in Arab society…her resistance and her character was so strong. She was really very dominant and amazingly proud of her family. She wanted them to come back. And the thing is, I remember when I was a child. She used to say sit with me and she would tell me about all her stories. From the Turkish, to the occupation…so I grew up with these stories in my memory. To find the situation in front of me, facing the Nakba as a new generation. My grandmother's stories, and my continuously accumulated memories of childhood and until now...

YH: Did your grandmother told you most of the stories?

R: Yes, my grandmother. My father wasn't very much open to talk about his trauma. And that is something very interesting you should look into because they are still living the trauma. They are still living the exile... They were really fighting in 1948. This left them with a big trauma. He never really initiated any information. But when something happened he would talk about it. He would start revealing more information.

YH: So he needed a bit of a push to ignite the story telling?

R: Exactly. He needed a trigger to make him feel confident and talk. I remember as well when I was a child in Tarshiha, they used to take us to the police station. It used to be for the Turkish and now its for the Israelis. During the so called Independence Day, our Nakba Day, the use to take us children and we would stand on both sides of the entrance of the police station waving Israeli flags. And this is a huge trauma

for me. This was celebrating our Nakba. This was part of the military rules that my family lived through. And I am still carrying the memory of this.

YH: Can I ask what year you were born in?

R: 1971.

YH: Is that ok?

R: Yes of course! I am 43 years old.

YH: We have been talking about your personal family narrative. Do you think that there is one Palestinian collective narrative?

R: Yes of course. The Narrative of the Nakba. Every single family, every single house had an experience with the Nakba and the aftermath of the Nakba. Either they are living in exile or they are living here, having to deal with so many issues after the Nakba. Especially the military regime that they had to live through. They were scared and too traumatised to talk. That's why my father, I believe, wasn't able to talk. He was scared, he was terrified that anybody could come and arrest him. And that passed on to the new generation, to my brothers as well. When my brother wanted to study for example, he was applying to Israeli Universities and he wasn't accepted there. So he went to Italy, where he was studying for two years and when he used to return home we were sealed inside 1948, we had no cultural or political communication with the other Palestinians- with our brothers and sisters in the refugee camps and abroad. So we were thirsty for a connection or communication with them. So he used to come back with books and music and poetry like Mahmoud Darwish. Because we as a generation, it was forbidden for any Palestinian poet or writer to be taught at our schools. So we were always eager to learn more about what's happening abroad, in Lebanon, in the refugee camps, Marcel Khalifi and Mahmoud Darwish and all that. So I was the one in charge of hiding the books behind my pillow or under my bed for the police not to come and find them in our house.

YH: Did they ever come and search?

R: Of course. That's what I remember. I also remember something from when I was 11, in 1982, with the Sabra and Shatilla massacre. I remember very well the symbolic funeral and march that happened the same day, marching from the mosque to the church. Carry symbolic coffins that symbolized the massacre. And I was 11 years old, marching and wandering around not really understanding what's happening. But still I felt the heavy air, the heaviness of the incident, the fear and the sadness. Its embedded in my memory

YH: Did a lot of people commemorate Sabra and Shatilla inside 48?

R: Yes, it was a big thing. It was all over. I have photos actually from that time. So that's my childhood. I am still cry at the memory after all these years… I believe that everybody is living with this and dealing with it. But sometimes some people are open to talk about it and some people are not. Some people are able to deal with it and face it and some are blocking it and living in denial of the Nakba. As I told you my father always needed a trigger or encouragement to talk. When we used to walk around in the fields he used to talk actually. Or when we would drive along the Lebanese border he actually talked about it clearly.

YH: So being on the land, maybe evokes feelings and makes it easier for people to talk?

R: Yes. But coming back to your question I believe the collective narrative is there. But yet some people are still afraid. Many times I ask people and talk about things and they are not very open to talk about it. They are very concerned about their future, what will happen to their children, what is next etc. They are afraid if they talk maybe the Israelis will come and shut their business. There are many concerns. But the memory is embedded in the body and the mind. Also the new generation has broken many of these barriers and they go out and demonstrate. And I think that has encouraged the older generation to come out a bit. And that's my analysis from being on the scene at demonstrations. In most cases though people are afraid and

are not courageous to tell it frankly.

YH: What do you think are the key markers or the key points of the Palestinian story?

R: Of course the Nakba is the first one…the 1967 war as well. Of course the Palestinian revolution in 1936, my father would mention this and both my grandmothers. All the events afterwards, starting from the October events, before that the First Intifada in 87 (whose anniversary happens to be today), the Second Intifada, the many wars on Gaza, the Lebanese war in 2006, the Gulf war… the wars on Lebanon. There are many. Its countless. Every event, every war has left yet another layer of devastation and trauma.

YH: And what significance do you think the Nakba has on your life now?

R: A big significance. This is my personal and political memory. When the personal becomes political it all binds together to make your character. It shapes you as a human being, as an artist, as a Palestinian…so the Nakba is a major chapter that shaped my memory, my character and my being. As a daughter of a survivor of a victim of the Nakba. All my family are victims of the Nakba. We still have many family living in exile because of the Nakba. They are not allowed to come back. And of course knowing the facts about my village Tarshiha…it had everything. Its future was a big city. But that dream was killed. By confiscating the land, turning us into their slaves. Making us dependent on them on so many levels. By confiscating the land you kill everything. You kill the expansion of the town, you kill the business the culture. But despite all that we are still there and we are resisting. We are there and we have no intention to go anywhere and we have to keep going because its part of our history. But I have to also hang on to the memory of my father and my grandparents and to pass it on to the future generations.

YH: Do you take part in commemorative activities for Palestinian history or activities that promote Palestinian identity in 1948?

R: Yes of course. For example, the annual march of return where every year they

pick a different destroyed village to march to. Also, there is often something on Land Day. I am always out there taking part in demonstrations and protests. I try to interfere somehow with my art. I want to escalate the level of resistance. For most cases, these are all peaceful demonstrations. But I like to interfere with my art, for example one of the pieces I did was to carry a homeless pillow on the march of return. The concept of the pillow was that it had an extended head and a neck which I carried on my shoulder. And the idea was returning home to your roots to the location where Israel has planted so many trees to cover up the crime. And we see that this is a strategy of the Israeli government to plant forests and build another settlement on top. This is as well as the confiscation of land and the controlling of water resources. So yes I always take part.

YH: And why is it important that to take part?

R: For me I don't have to prove to anyone that I am Palestinian. It's a normal thing. I do it on a daily basis. Even when I go shopping I do my part because I boycott Israeli products. Even when you take public transport and talk in Arabic you are doing your share by being there and by existing. Your existence here by all means is resistance. So how come a demonstration or a protest would not be important? That's why I feel like it's an obligation, I can go out and tell the truth. It's becoming bigger and bigger. Many foreigners come and take part. Some of the liberal Jews come and take part.

YH: Even with the commemorative activities that remember the history? Do you feel that, that is resistance in itself…just by remembering?

R: Yes because if it wasn't, they wouldn't make it illegal in the Israeli parliament. The Israeli entity is afraid of the collective memory. They are afraid that this new generation is going to grow up on these values and these commemorations. They fear it. And its about time for them to fear. They should be afraid because they have done something wrong. The Zionists had a saying about the Palestinians that the elderly will die and the young will forget. We are proving the total opposite. If you ask any child in the West Bank, he doesn't tell you I am from Aida Refugee Camp…he tells you which original village he is from. And that is the big role of the family. Not so much the educational system, somehow in the West Bank they are trying to make

the narrative less dramatic. As well in 1948 they are studying the Israeli curriculum. If you go to university in Haifa or in Tel Aviv you study in Hebrew and the Israeli curriculum. After a long struggle now there might be an Arab University in Nazareth but nobody is supporting it from the Arab world.

YH: Who do you think plays a bigger role in keeper this memory and story alive. The Palestinian institutions in 1948 or the family units?

R: That's a difficult question.

YH: It doesn't have to be either or it could be both.

R: I think it is both. My family has played a big role in my case. The institutions are more recent. The personal experience of each family, each family has its own memory and its own trauma. So yes the family and the community has a big role in holding on to this memory and keeping it alive. For example in Tarshiha, people are afraid to talk about it but still there has been an annual commemorations for the last ten years on the 29th of October. This has given us more power and has given more weight to the story. We have to be in charge of our narrative. If you forget all these layers of suffering and exile, what is left? Nothing. For example it has also to do with the elderly. We are living on their legacy and memory. My grandfather used to say if anyone dares to uproot an olive tree he will dammed for all his life. If anyone will exchange a piece of land with the Jews or the occupiers he will also be dammed for all his life. That's is why we still own 4 dunums of land in one of the settlements (Kfar Avradim). They were outraged to know we still own it. So what they do is they come to the family and say ok either you lose everything or you exchange it for somewhere else. And we refused to do anything. So the land is still there and they cannot do anything to it. So we still own it- its part of our great-grandfather's will not to exchange it. And my father, my brothers and I have agreed we will never sell it. And it's a big victory.

But I think the institutions, civil society, have played a role in breaking the barrier of fear. They have initiated things and broken the ice. Some of the political parties, which I really admire…I mean I am not one of the people the vote in the elections because I boycott it. But some of them have played a big role in shaping the new

generations memory…I remember in the 1980s when we have events and sing the Palestinian national anthem and raise the Palestinian flag, the person carrying the flag would have to cover their face...actually everyone had to cover their face. They are going to issue another law to make the Palestinian flag illegal. So we might have to do this again. So I believe the new generation has developed a new system of resistance and that's great but it has to be more constant and more structured. The leaders have to place a bigger role in shaping a more systematic way. I mean you have to have a leader. We are in a situation where we have a lack of leadership. A lack of vision, a vision for freedom and the future. And that is what bothers me. With all the long history of resistance starting from my grandfather, then my father, and now my brother and my generation. We have gone through big developments in shaping the resistance structure. We are somehow…not lost but we are somehow always trying but its not enough. There is a lack of wisdom and clear vision from the leaders. This is what is keeping us in the same place. Despite that this new generation has broken all the barriers and has started going out to demonstrations, and speaking out. Also the social media network has also played a big role in that and has a big affect on many levels. I believe there must be a clearer vision in what is the next step. That's why I believe the Knesset is the not right podium for us. It is no the right place, it is not our game. The opposite. We are weakening ourselves by taking part in it. Of course I have boycotted it my whole life. Israel claim's it is a democracy. And they declare themselves a Jewish State. We are 20 years after the Oslo agreement and they want us to acknowledge them as a Jewish state. This is why we need support and a clear vision. There has to be more communication between all the Palestinian communities; those in exile in the West Bank and here. Quite often you hear in the media the Palestinians from 48 being marginalized. We are the root cause of the problem. The PA has no recognition for us which is a major problem. Carrying this dam passport makes me feel sick because I don't feel anything that connects with me with this identity. There is no Israeli identity at all. There is no character. Even if they give me my rights, the problem is not the government it's the whole nation…there are some small exceptions here and there. They are harming themselves by living in the Israeli fascist bubble.

YH: You said about the passport that you carry…do you feel in any way that the State you live in belongs to you or you belong to it?

R: The Israeli State? Of course not! It is an occupying force. I call it the Jewish Zionist Entity. That is the definition. It has nothing to do with democracy. On all levels we are discriminated against. In the best case you could say we are second or third class but we are much worse than that. We have to deal with it on a daily basis. In the West Bank it has a different meaning. The occupation there, they go and confiscate land, they kill people they cut the olive trees…In 48 they do it silently and it is not considered an occupation. It is institutionalized and everything id done by law. When they confiscate your land, when they prevent you from protesting, when they Judaise the Galilee and the Naqab…its all done by law.

YH: How do you feel your life would be different if you were living in the West bank, or Gaza or a refugee camp?

R: That's a complicated question. Each one of us has our own style of suffering and dealing with things under the same occupier. For example in 48, it is not exactly that you can speak out. It is not a democracy at all. We are so suppressed and it is depressing. People think oh well they can speak out. But I think it is the same experience with different faces. I feel that I have the freedom of movement between the West Bank and 48. But not the freedom of speech. It is only about physicality. I have no fear of facing a soldier inside the West Bank or in 48. I believe in my freedom of speech, in my freedom of resistance…There are different techniques that they use on us. Its different but both are difficult. People in 48 so much want to believe that they are respected by Israel but on the ground we are the same…spending some time in the West Bank and meeting people there it has proven to me that the economy is playing a big role in our life in 48. They want us to believe that if we are in a good economical situation and that if we are well off we will forget about our cause and our memories. That we will erase it and move on. Sometimes people say to me forget about it, live your life and be normal. But I think what does that mean exactly? You have a cause, a real cause to defend. How can you forget it? How can you put it aside, or on the shelf? No. You cannot do that. I mean it's a major cause that you have to resolve otherwise…you will be enslaved forever. For example I learned just now when I was visiting some places in 48, I saw some 16 year old girls who were volunteering in a nursery house and I asked them

do you volunteer here on your own? And they said its an obligation from the Israeli ministry of education. They won't approve your Bagroot examination, even if you have done all the exams, unless you have done this service. I think it is 60 hours of service…this is like the national service. Not the army service, it's the national service. Now they make it into a fact. They turn it into a law if you don't serve these hours you cannot take your Bagroot examination. So they are legalizing every single fascist law. It's a fascist state. It's a military fascist state. Its an entity. It's a military that has a country. That's what Israel is. I can tell you more stories… for some majors or universities Palestinians can only enter university at the age of 21 because Jews finish army service at the age of 21. That are much more laws and discrimination. There is so much to talk about. What is left for the democracy? What kind of democracy are they practicing. What kind of citizenship do they want me to feel? What kind of citizenship are they offering me? So all these questions I raise…There are many other issues. Some organisations are dealing with these things. The Arab Culture Centre, Mossawa… there are many organisations that are working on the issue of identity and civil rights and the rights of the Palestinians in 48.

YH: What do you see as the future?

R: Honestly…I don't know. It's a game of time gaining for Israel. And now with the new situation with that Netanyahu has created with the fall of the Israeli government…only now the Israeli parties want to unite. And then what? In Gaza there were 3000 martyrs, thousands of injuries, thousands of people left with disabilities, thousands of houses were destroyed…the whole area was destroyed and nobody said lets unite and leave the Knesset. I have a big take on the Israeli Arab parliament members. They only unite to keep their status. So I wont vote for them. I also have a big take on the Arab media. Where are we? Where are we standing? And that's why I feel frustrated. I feel like my art is my language. It is an escape from politics because otherwise I will be really frustrated and not doing anything. I don't want to leave this place. I want to be on my land and resist from here.